Encounter

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Tory Debate

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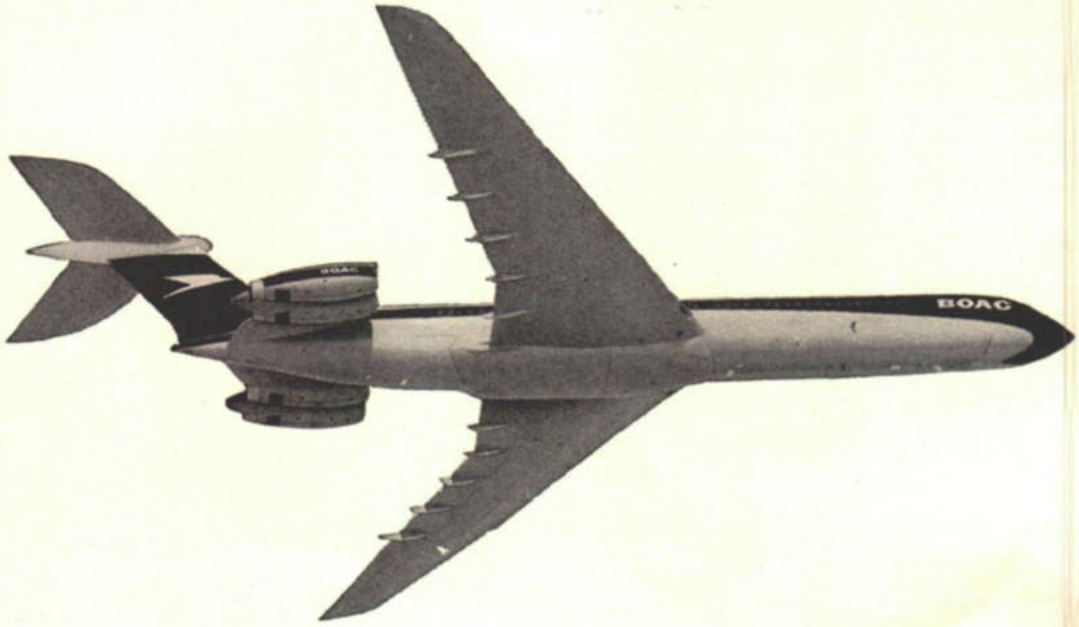

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CORRESPONDING EDITOR (U.S.A.): STEPHEN SPENDER

ASSISTANT EDITOR: *Margot Walmsley.* CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: *John Mander, John Gross, Anthony Hartley.*
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David Caute

Crisis in All Souls

A Case History in Reform

THE COLLEGE stands in the centre of Oxford but its fame extends far beyond. The dimensions of its reputation are formidable; yet this reputation increasingly owes more to myth and legend than to reality, and few outsiders appreciate the seriousness of All Souls' present sickness. A genuine distinction tends now towards *hubris*. This renowned nexus of power and intellect, shorn of its influence at a national level, now lies paralysed in the grip of a profound crisis which it apparently lacks the capacity to resolve. The forthcoming report of the University Commission of Inquiry is awaited in All Souls with real apprehension.

In the first instance, the problem of All Souls was the problem of its immense wealth. Few Oxford colleges are richer. A burgeoning revenue has acted in recent years as a catalyst, forcing the College to wrestle with its own contradictions and inducing it to flounder like a golden whale in the shallows of reform.

The figures virtually speak for themselves in explaining the origins of the present crisis. In 1963, at a time when many Oxford colleges were supporting expanding teaching and research programmes on shoe-string budgets, All Souls' gross annual revenue climbed to £202,251 (which can be taken to represent a capital value of about £4 million). Net revenue was £100,959. Of this, fully £23,717—nearly 25%—was listed as "surplus." In fact, a careful examination of the accounts revealed a further £14,969 of surplus revenue derived from the Building and General Reserve Fund, which had grown by £152,000 in ten years, mainly out of the accumulation of annual surpluses. Thus in 1963 All Souls was failing to spend approximately £38,000 of its yearly income.[1]

In acquiring this revenue, the College relies largely on rents. There is no sloth here; rents are constantly maximised. And the College guards its capital endowment no less jealously. The Oxford University Commission of Inquiry was told in January 1965 that "All Souls does not believe that *any* system of contribution could produce a sum which would make a real difference to the poorer colleges without ruining or crippling the richer colleges.... The problems of the poorer colleges cannot be solved by milking the richer colleges." Such egoism is no doubt sacred. Even so, a simple calculation reveals that All Souls' revenue, if divided among the twenty less wealthy Oxford colleges, would endow no fewer than sixty additional teaching fellowships.

FOR MORE THAN ten years All Souls has refused or failed to spend its enormous revenue. In 1956

DAVID CAUTE, *young Oxford historian (and novelist), recently resigned his fellowship at All Souls. He is the author of* Communism and the French Intellectuals *(1964) and a forthcoming history of* The Left in Europe.

[1] This has been no secret; College accounts are public. However, much of the material I have drawn upon was of course intended for All Souls eyes alone. There is no statutory clause which binds fellows to secrecy, but it would be quite impossible to write about the internal affairs of the College while still a member of it. This was one of the considerations which prompted me to resign. Even so, some of my erstwhile colleagues will experience indignation at the betrayal. I can only answer that no fellow will find his relations with other fellows compromised by what I have written. But it has to be admitted that the zealous historian, like the zealous lover, gets his hands on whatever the law allows.

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the College received a lump sum compensation of about half a million pounds under the Town and Country Planning Acts. The previous Estates Bursar apparently advised that it would not be prudent to spend either the capital or the interest, and so the money was salted away. Later, the new Estates Bursar explained the matter to the University Commission with almost euphemistic delicacy:

> ...it was obvious that some new expenditure could safely be incurred, and since 1956 the College has been trying to keep pace with the increase in its revenue... to keep pace in ideas ...is not easy... a number of new forms of expenditure were decided upon... in fact those decisions were overtaken by the continued buoyancy of the revenue, and I am the last person to deplore that....

Like his predecessor, the Estates Bursar has been cautious. In May 1963 he admitted to the College: "My estimates were conservative in several respects, and indications are that there will be a greater increase in gross revenue than I have shown, and that there will be similar increases in future years." Yet even now his notions of progress were bounded by Whiggish limitations. In November, while anticipating a surplus revenue of £25,000 for 1964, he would not contemplate spending more than an additional £12,500 on an expanding research programme. He still regarded a building (which would involve a loss in revenue of about £4,000 *p.a.*) as too expensive, and he justified his caution by gloomy references to the imminence of a Labour Government. But he has on occasions responded to pressure and, in theory at least, he came to accept the principle of expenditure to the very limit of revenue. For a short period it really did look as if All Souls was about to justify the high tone it had adopted to the University Commission:

> It is a mistake to suppose that colleges with large endowments necessarily have money to spare. They have or should have correspondingly large commitments.... If the butter were spread thin ...it would produce a number of modest societies with modest ambitions and capabilities ...there should be societies which can afford to be ambitious and to do things on a large scale.

These were the months—from the spring of 1964 until the summer of 1965—when reforming zeal rode in the ascendant and the impression became widespread that All Souls would at last take a place in the vanguard of higher education.

But the counter-revolution struck swiftly and with paralysing effect.

All Souls is a college of great beauty. The back quadrangle, designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor, must rank among the best examples of early eighteenth-century architecture in the country. On a fine day, the high towers achieve a splended pride and assurance; together with the Radcliffe Camera and the pinnacles of the Bodleian, they form a combination of breath-taking beauty. Yet the eye flatters only to deceive.

All Souls' claims to distinctiveness are two: it has no students, either graduate or undergraduate; and a large minority of its enfranchised fellows have little or nothing to do with the academic profession and the world of scholarship. Its claims to distinction are more varied. It is old (founded in 1438); it is rich; and it boasts a tradition of unequalled intellectual brilliance. This claim is based partly on the system whereby the younger "prize fellows" are recruited every autumn by competitive examination, an average of two being elected each year. (Therefore this is the one All Souls myth to which I fervently subscribe.) But the glory of the College has lain elsewhere; the long shadows of the Hawksmoor towers reach to Westminster and Whitehall; the literary strivings of the All Souls yogis, notable as they have sometimes been, have never met with more than condescending indulgence from the commissars.

For nearly sixty years the Editor of *The Times* was a fellow of All Souls. Between the wars the College's corridors were trodden by eminent clerics of the Anglican establishment, headed by Cosmo Lang; by great empire builders and bankers, Curzon, Chelmsford, Halifax, Brand, Dougal Malcolm and Lionel Curtis; and last, but not least, by the renowned appeasers, Simon, Dawson and Halifax again, of blessed memory. Of course it is true that the College also contained its anti-appeasers like Leo Amery and Sir Arthur Salter, as well as its prospective Labour candidates like Dr. A. L. Rowse. But then, as now, the placemen listened to the scribes only to disregard them; in the common room beneath the high towers some of the most catastrophic decisions of the age were contested in vain—the refusal to bring down Mussolini, the refusal to help Republican Spain, the refusal to collaborate with Russia, the refusal to defend Czechoslovakia. But that all belongs to the past; even with Mr. Quintin Hogg a Distinguished Fellow and Mr. Douglas Jay a *quondam*, the glory of being associated with truly epoch-making political blunders seems to have gone from All Souls for ever.

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Now, IT MAY BE ASKED: why should All Souls be held accountable to outside opinion for its actions? Is it not widely believed that in the higher academic reaches sloth, confusion, and incompetence are the hallmarks of scholarly erudition and intellectual brilliance? So why not leave All Souls in peace to manage or mismanage its own affairs?

It has to be remembered that there are two basic models of academic organisation and government. Either policies are made and enforced by professional administrators, in which case the dons, while free to carry on with their own work, may find themselves saddled with rules and obligations which they find uncongenial; or, alternatively, the dons, being *le peuple,* are sovereign. Here the advantages and burdens are precisely the reverse. The fellows of All Souls, no less than other Oxford dons, cherish and guard their right to decentralised, collegiate self-government, to an autonomy which is still very real. Consequently they have to be judged by their lights.

And there are other factors. In the modern age even so exclusive an enclave as All Souls is to some extent financially integrated in the general educational structure. Its revenue is liable neither to income tax nor corporation tax; it is exempt from all but a nominal rates payment; it has statutory taxation obligations to the University which is itself the recipient of large government grants. These considerations are the formal, or quasi-legal ones. Beyond this, no one should be surprised that a body of sixty men who are custodians (and the beneficiaries) of property worth £4 million, and who occupy a large site in the heart of Oxford, has begun to arouse the friendly interest of a community which regards education as a high social priority. As the Chairman of the University Commission, Lord Franks, recently reminded representatives of All Souls:

> Fellows of colleges are trustees for their generation of the assets which they control . . . with an educational foundation which is a charity, one would not expect it to be spending a part of its time simply increasing its wealth . . . one would expect it to be putting the wealth to full use. . . .[2]

MY OWN EARLIEST memories of All Souls politics (I was recruited in October 1959) are, it has to be admitted, frivolous ones. The very age and venerability of some of my new colleagues awed and astonished me. But awe soon breeds its own negation, frivolity: the synthesis is liable to take the form of acts of provocation which have no serious intent. Thus a motion that the College should admit women as fellows merely provoked an argument about lavatory facilities and mild tremors of indignation amongst those senior fellows who regard themselves (with justification) as All Souls' anchor in the past.

Otherwise, in the years before the reform agitation gathered momentum, the fellows were roused collectively only by the periodic elections of more fellows. It was interesting to discover that for a number of senior fellows, particularly those already in retirement, intellectual capability was only one factor among several to be considered when making an election. Thus several years ago a minority of one-third actually blackballed a scholar who was known to be one of the leading figures in his field anywhere in the world, and who was unanimously agreed to outstrip the other contenders as regards academic distinction. His crime—and I do not exaggerate—was to be a foreigner who did not suffer fools gladly.

In a normal Oxford college, as in any normal university department, a vacancy occurs, or a new post is created, in a particular subject—economics, or physics, or medieval history. The field of selection therefore reduces itself to those working in that specialised discipline. But in All Souls the decision is taken to elect, say, two more research fellows within the whole range of subjects covered by the College—history, politics, economics, philosophy, classical languages, and law. As a consequence, each senior fellow or professor advances a candidate from his own field; tribal mayhem ensues. Each advocate casts aspersions on the merits of his rivals' candidates. After the fever of the election there follow muttered recriminations and oblique shafts of guilt. But nothing is changed. The resolution that "... three or four fellows should be charged with the task of keeping the College informed of the University's needs, and that research fellowships should be offered in particular subjects where a need is disclosed . . ." remained a dead letter. The path of All Souls is paved with dead letters. In such a climate schizophrenia is inevitably endemic. Pride and despair alternate with bewildering rapidity. A speech beginning with the words "we must act with speed and determination if we are to re-

[2] *University of Oxford Commission of Inquiry, Report of Evidence by All Souls College, 11 February, 1965.*

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deem ourselves in the eyes of the University," is more than likely to end with the assurance that "the plan I have outlined will increase the respect in which the College is widely held."

But such episodes are mere symptoms. The worst thing about the late 18th-century parliament was not its refusal to seat Wilkes; and if rotten boroughs preferred the Duke of Newcastle's men to Paine and Priestley, that was only to be expected. The limitations of the conservative imagination are no doubt its strengths; those with the least understanding of progress are the best equipped to thwart it.

THE MOST RECENT reform movement in All Souls got under way early in 1963 and was killed outright in November 1965 (after which I, for one, had had enough). It is with the intervening events that I shall deal here.

The attentive reader will recall that in 1963 surplus revenue reached £38,000. Everyone agreed that something must be done. The surplus took on the aspect of a bomb which threatened to shatter the fabric and internal balance of the College. In all, four major schemes have been proposed and pursued as a means of disposing of surplus revenue: (*1*) the election of more research fellows; (2) the construction of a building inside the College to accommodate the new fellows and to ensure their integration; (3) the incorporation of graduate students into All Souls. I shall come to the fourth scheme later.

There is a temptation, in the interests of clarity, to describe the fortunes of these projects separately. But why should the reader enjoy a privilege denied to the fellows themselves? Why should his path be less foggy than theirs? To savour their odyssey he too must grope in the night of passing time and discover that the *status quo* is a fine mesh, resilient, elastic and resourceful, which permits the assault party to thrash about, comforted by illusions of victory, until finally they collapse exhausted. The impregnability of All Souls is largely a matter of structure, of scale and complexity, but it is also the work of an intelligence whose subtlety has long been at the service of the motto *non movere*.

I refer, in fact, to the Warden of All Souls, Mr. John Sparrow. I have not felt it necessary to name those fellows with whom I disagree; if they wish to declare themselves, they will no doubt do so. However, Mr. Sparrow has played so crucial a part in All Souls' affairs—as any Warden must—that an account which ignored his role would be hollow and deficient.

In the spring of 1963 a University Committee issued a report, known as the Harrison Report, which drew attention to the growing number of Oxford instructors, readers, and lecturers who worked and taught without membership of any college or common room. In an environment where social life and status life are organised on a local basis, this homelessness posed a problem, and the Report urged colleges to do as much as they could to absorb the underprivileged.

All Souls was in a position to do more than most. The Warden agreed that the problem ought to be considered, and therefore set up a College committee, known as the Harrison Committee, to examine the situation. The Committee deliberated. Sunday followed Sunday. Words piled up, like dust. It was a fine spring turning into summer, and I recall the enervating effect of the long shafts of sunlight which penetrated the high windows of the small library overlooking the Warden's garden. The financial question still lay in the background. It would cost the College very little to absorb the University lecturers, since their salaries were already paid. The issue was more one of principle. The reformers wanted All Souls to open its doors wide and to make a generous and perhaps redeeming gesture. The conservators had their suspicions about the qualifications of those whom the College was being asked to take in. Reputations were destroyed, sometimes with scrupulous care, and the College's academic "standards" were raised on a pedestal beyond the reach of mortals. In the end three dons were admitted.

BUT ONE THING led to another. The committee seized the hot iron of general reform. The problem of the surplus revenue now became central. In October 1963, I circulated a memorandum which argued that "if we are to fulfil our claim to exist primarily for research, we ought to have considerably more research and academic fellows. The question of long-term planning has too often been deferred at College meetings in favour of short-term, *ad hoc* and *ad hominem* decisions."

One school regarded this approach with scepticism. The Warden was sceptical. While agreeing that the College ought to spend its surplus revenue, he denied that there was an obligation to spend the bulk of it *internally*. Reverting to the *reductio ad absurdum* principle, he pointed out that if the College were

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left a large legacy, it would be compelled to give some of the money away. He favoured Rockefeller-style grants. By giving its money away, All Souls would preserve its character intact. Late in 1963 he summed up his position: "any increase in the size of the College above 60 fellows (the present number is 57), besides necessitating building or otherwise acquiring further accommodation, increasing 'overheads' and causing administrative and 'bursarial' difficulties—would inevitably impair, if not destroy, the collegiate character of All Souls." The College, he said, would become an institution. Others thought that it was already too much like a club.

All Souls cannot pass itself off as Rockefeller or Ford and hope to get away with it. The bleeding had to stop. A college which can find nothing better to do with its money than to give it away will sooner or later find it hard to defend its right to act as trustee for that money. The truth of this came to be generally understood, and the majority of fellows agreed, in principle at least, that it would not do for All Souls to become a "milch cow."

The dialogue continued through the spring and early summer of 1964. The reform platform, at first confined to the demand for more research fellows, soon extended to a second and concomitant proposal—the erection of a building inside the College to accommodate the new fellows. The Warden opposed the second proposal even more resolutely than the first. Although he was unable to stem the tide and prevent the College from formally adopting both plans in June, he did secure a compensatory success which can now be seen to have had far-reaching and damaging consequences for the future. Warned that public relations dictated the move, the College agreed to give £88,000 away. Many fellows, who would have preferred to see the money spent on internal expansion and reform, were dogged by the fear that All Souls never would spend its surplus, and that therefore the lesser evil was to hand over the money to others who would use it both promptly and effectively. This is a recurring dilemma; the probable constantly treads on the toes of the possible.

GIVING LARGE SUMS of money away would, some hoped, make the reform tiger a paper tiger. But this tactic alone would not suffice; a deeper strategy was required. Thus Mr. Sparrow became, quite suddenly, the most zealous of reformers, urging the College not to restrict its horizons to such modest expedients as expansion and building, but to contemplate also the brave new frontiers opened up by the incorporation of graduate students. The Warden, it is true, did not invent this idea; he simply adopted it in the weeks before the College was due to vote on expansion and a new building. The aim, to my mind, was to defer a final decision until such time as the appetite for change had subsided. "A graduate scheme for All Souls," he wrote, "seems to me good in itself and good for 'public relations.' If we adopted it, we should in fact be doing something to help in a serious University problem . . . and we should present a better front to a Commission."

To those who sensed in this a diversion, the Warden hastened to give reassurance. "Of course this is not suggested as a substitute for the expansion programme; it would be a two-pronged advance. . . ." However: "a less ambitious programme for election of fellows would mitigate the problem of 'over-size' College meetings. . . ." As for graduates, it transpired that All Souls' "help in a serious University problem" need not assume extravagant proportions. "We need not contemplate more than ten [graduates] initially."

But the College refused to be diverted. Not only did it put its seal to a plan for electing six to eight additional research fellows, and for the erection of a building as soon as possible, but, heady with the wine of progress, it further declared itself willing to discuss in the months ahead the possibilities of taking in graduate students. The Warden now found himself committed to a long battle of attrition on three fronts.

To the preservation of the *status quo* Mr. Sparrow has brought not only a lawyer's experience of manoeuvre but also a profound grasp of the fourth dimension of defence, delay. The climate of frustration, logic-chopping, "thinking again" (*i.e.*, reconsidering a decision already made by the College), and depressing inertia in which All Souls' business is often conducted could doubtless be conveyed only by a novelist. Even the struggle for a logical agenda and a concise timetable is liable to assume heroic proportions.

Language itself takes on a mysterious, fourth dimensional quality: "It is hoped to hold the meeting early in January. January 30th is the suggested date." A whole morning can be wasted in discussing whether giving away

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capital is as much "milch cow" as giving away revenue.

THE WARDEN, it should be explained, has never lost sight of the fact that majorities, like states, can wither away. Certainly it was not he who said, *vox populi, vox dei*. Thus on 20 June 1964, immediately after the decision to build had been taken, he announced to a silent assembly that he "had not foregone any legal right he might have to object to the erection of a building within the curtilage of the Lodgings." This made a poor impression, and his decision to refer the matter to a sub-committee of College lawyers did little to improve it.

Having drawn attention to the attractions of a graduate scheme in May–June 1964, he gave the impression of hoping that it might ultimately neutralise the other projects. Nevertheless by the autumn he was clearly worried by the snowballing progress of the graduate scheme. Capitalised statements that "NO VOTE WOULD BE TAKEN AT THE MEETING CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE QUESTION," as well as several attempts to call off special meetings, may have created the impression that the Warden was not in November so anxious for All Souls to embrace graduates as he had seemed to be in May.

But even a Warden's influence has its limits. The victories for reform in June 1964, qualified though they were, can be attributed to the fact that the *idea* of reform (if not the full consequences) had temporarily caught the imaginations of a large majority of fellows. This nominal majority remained in existence for a further twelve months, but the nucleus of a revived opposition was already apparent in the autumn of 1964.

THE ARCHETYPAL conservator, the admirer of integral *immobilisme*, harried by the grimace of change and disturbance, finds solace in a diet of insuperable difficulties. We have already encountered the Warden's worries about "increasing 'overheads'" and "administrative and 'bursarial' difficulties." The hard-core opponents of the graduate scheme revealed the same attitude. "The selection of graduate students," they wrote, "particularly from overseas, would be difficult, especially if we are to maintain sufficient academic standards"—in other words, we can't have pupils because they won't be good enough. But worse:

> the problem of assimilating 25 or 30 graduate students would also be very difficult. What is to be their relationship with the Fellows? If the graduate students are to share our common rooms, the Fellows must be crowded out—both physically and in the sense that the balance of age in our society will be upset... an attempt to combine a larger number of graduate students with a smaller number of senior people in a single community sharing the same common rooms, etc., can lead to great difficulties not to be brushed lightly aside. The alternative—the provision of a separate table and a separate common room for the graduate students—would also be very unsatisfactory. If we excluded the students from our day to day society, we might give the impression that we were relegating them to an inferior status.... A satisfactory connection is possible only if the Warden and Fellows are prepared to give up a great deal of their time.... Once, however, the College had embarked upon a large intake... it might be very difficult to stop admitting them....

The debate about graduate students continued into the first weeks of 1965. As two fellows wrote at the time, "there is a danger... that we shall go on talking... *ad infinitum*." With the University Commission hanging over the College like the sword of Damocles, an atmosphere of mounting nervousness prevailed. The staunch conservators were calling upon their men to be stout-hearted. But the retreat was general. The Warden had written to the Vice-Chancellor, asking how best All Souls could help the University. Having consulted the Hebdomadal Council, the Vice-Chancellor replied that All Souls could not do better than to take in graduate students, provided that she acted with sufficient enthusiasm and imagination. He seemed to think that almost anything would be preferable, from the University's point of view, than for All Souls merely to expand its "traditional activities."

This was no doubt very disobliging of the Vice-Chancellor. Learning that the College must deliver a full account of itself before the University Commission in mid-February, the Warden now spoke openly of his fear of criticism and even confiscation, and he appeared to succumb to fears which he had once listed, no doubt ironically, when reviewing F. M. Cornford's celebrated *Microcosmographia Academica*: "Fear of Being Thought Behind the Times; Fear of Seeming to Claim Privilege; and Fear of Questioning the Equality of Everybody with Everybody else...." Much daunted, he prepared to carry before the Commission three heavy loads; expansion; a building; and graduate students. He abhorred them all.

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DESPITE THE NERVOUSNESS inspired by the Commission, the more senior fellows retained their equanimity. All this had happened before. Like Machiavelli's Italy, All Souls experiences cycles of decadence and regeneration largely connected with the menace of foreign Powers. (Archbishop Whitgift's condemnation of the College in 1598 for its divisions and for the "corruption and sordid vices" of the fellows, presumably marked a moment of ebb.) Yet for All Souls high periods and low are relative not absolute; long ago the College mastered the art of making smoke without fire. The Royal Commissioners of 1852 were critical: they hoped to restore "so noble an institution to the cause of learning and education without altogether sacrificing the peculiar character that belongs to All Souls"—which is rather like wanting to restore the American Negro to his freedom without altogether sacrificing the peculiar charm of Southern slavery. Seventy years later, in 1922, a new Royal Commission reported. It found All Souls to be in poor shape and admitted that the College "has been singled out for special criticism in several of the memoranda submitted to us." The Oxford Reform Committee had discovered that All Souls' endowments "are not at present used to the best advantage of the University or of education." A minority wanted to convert the College into a University department.

All Souls reacted with much smoke. In fact the smoke of 1922 was identical with that of 1965—graduates! The Royal Commission learned with gratification that the necessary by-laws had been drafted. But nothing came of it. In a society where the ruling class investigated the ruling class (the President of the Statutory Commission, Viscount Chelmsford, was a fellow of All Souls and later Warden), and in which property was still a synonym for freedom, anxiety never ran deep. As late as 1964 some in the College were confident that any future Royal Commission would contain a safe quota of *quondams* and friends.

YET THE LAW of "wolf, wolf" must eventually apply. The chains of past pledges grow more burdensome. Between 1926 and 1962 the number of research fellows in All Souls increased by only six. In 1965 the College had to admit to the Commission that the non-academic classes of fellows made up "much the same proportion of the total number of fellows as they did before the war." Putting a bold gloss on things was no longer easy. The facts threatened to speak for themselves. Thus great care was applied to the drafting of the College's written report. For example, in the draft of October 1964 we read: "The main purpose of All Souls is to provide for the furtherance of research." But further investigation—I recall the incident—revealed that the proportion of research fellows in the College was only 30 per cent of the total. In the draft of January 1965 we therefore read: "The main purpose of All Souls is to provide for the furtherance of learning."

Other bogus claims were brought out and dusted down. Nuffield and St. Antony's had apparently been founded in direct imitation of All Souls (even though they possess what All Souls so conspicuously lacks—students; even though they have miraculously surmounted the problem of combining "a larger number of graduate students with a smaller number of senior people in a single community..."). All Souls claimed that "the feature of external and internal fellows has also been adopted by Nuffield and St. Antony's." This thrust backfired and resulted in a rout. The Commissioners commented that the external fellows of those two Colleges were elected on account of the relevance of their professional experience to the subjects studied within the College. The Warden agreed, and conceded that All Souls' Distinguished Fellows could make no such claim.

February 11th, 1965, the day the College's representatives met the Commissioners, was a painful one. The verbatim report contains one or two items of praise and much politeness, but little comfort for the conservators.

> You have been behaving a little bit like a charitable foundation and not solely like a college... the College... has been running rather under the potentialities which its total position allowed to it... fellows of colleges are trustees for their generation of the assets which they control... it would be natural for an external body to wonder whether the College has been thinking largely enough about itself; whether its general attitude... has been pursued with sufficient vigour... whether you feel that the College is now thinking in a way which allows it fully to develop what it has in itself to give to Oxford and to the College... whether... when you look at the whole College and its position with other colleges in Oxford, that there is not the appearance of exclusiveness or of a club.

One member of the Commission asked bluntly: "You regard the professorial fellows as

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sufficiently opening the closed shop?" The Warden said he did.

Even so, All Souls got off lightly. And why? Here we cannot do better than to quote the Warden, who wrote a few days later: "Our treatment at the hands of the Commission would have been very different had the policy decision taken at our meeting of 30 January been other than what it was." To this decision we may now turn.

ON 30 JANUARY 1965—a fortnight before it faced the Commission—All Souls passed the following resolution by 31 votes to 15, with two abstentions: "We propose to incorporate graduate students, in one way or another, in our College body without delay."

Two main lines of argument had emerged. The reformers reasoned that a graduate scheme would not only meet a University need (as the Vice-Chancellor had indicated), but that it would also reinvigorate the College and endow it with a badly needed sense of purpose and cohesion. The organism, to be healthy, required its own students and its own responsibilities. The opposition insisted that the University's prime requirement was not more graduates but more supervisors for graduates, and that All Souls should therefore concentrate on bringing more teachers to Oxford, whether by way of permanent fellowships or on a visiting basis.

This was a respectable argument (common room difficulties had hastily been swept under the mat), but vulnerable to a single objection: if the aim was to provide more graduate supervisors, then what more effective method could be found than to unlock the untapped teaching resources of All Souls?

The majority for reform was an impressive one. Many of us mistook the smoke for genuine fire. Morale ran high. The task now was to investigate ways and means, and there were several possibilities. If a suitable site were found, the College might "go it alone." Or it could collaborate with an undergraduate College, like Corpus Christi, which wished to increase its own graduate intake; or, thirdly, it could work in co-operation with one of Oxford's two graduate Colleges, St. Antony's.

To my mind the St. Antony's scheme was always the best (although if an alternative graduate project had been chosen and implemented, I would certainly have supported it). To begin with, there were negative advantages —in other words the disadvantages of going it alone. Some of these were practical—a suitable site, overall size, etc.—but the most important ones were psychological. The reformers faced a dilemma. All Souls might be coaxed into turning over a new leaf, but she was hardly likely to flip over like a pancake. In the meantime, the new graduates might find themselves the victims of neglect and even aversion; certainly no one could have expected the Warden to accord them enthusiastic pastoral care—the very idea of their intrusion, as he often made clear, darkened his day.

Graduate colleges have proved a success. Working in conjunction with St. Antony's, we would have had the initial advantage of being able to graft our own most active element on to a body which had already proven its vitality and imagination in the field of graduate studies. The forty or fifty All Souls graduates would from the start have been integrated with about seventy St. Antony's graduates. Also, as two All Souls professors wrote at the time, "The fields of study in which St. Antony's are mainly interested are to a large extent our own... the academic future of these studies would benefit from their integration in a larger field of historical and legal studies." Beyond such immediate considerations, it seemed probable that a complete union with St. Antony's—and this was the assumption when negotiations began—would in time ease the All Souls non-academic element out of the joint Governing Body, if not out of the College.

There were practical advantages and disadvantages. The land for building would be free, a saving of perhaps £60,000. On the other hand, St. Antony's is nearly a mile away from All Souls, and it was argued that the physical circumstances of the graduates would lead them to feel part of St. Antony's rather than of All Souls. This argument was reinforced when in the summer St. Antony's (sensibly, perhaps) turned down the idea of a total merger, and made proposals for partial co-operation. But these considerations were never decisive; the advantages always outweighed the drawbacks. It was clear that if All Souls embraced its new role with enthusiasm, taking an active part in the selection and supervision of graduates, organising seminars and classes, making generous disposal of its kitchens, common rooms and library, then All Souls' students would soon know to which parent body they belonged.

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IN THE END, when the final vote came in November (although the vote in January had also been "final"), ninety per cent of those who reaffirmed their support for graduates agreed that the St. Antony's scheme was the best. Certainly enthusiasm was never lacking on the other side. Yet only with difficulty had the project been kept alive. Its very scale and vision, its threat to ingrained parochialism, endowed it with an almost criminal character.

The Estates Bursar's hostility towards co-operating with St. Antony's was from beginning to end the main problem. He persisted in framing his financial arguments in favour of an alternative and much less popular scheme, lost touch with opinion, and was surprised to find himself in almost complete isolation when the final vote came.

For his part, the Warden, once the ordeal of appearing before the Commission was behind him, began to have second thoughts. He evidently hoped that, if graduates did materialise, they would be seen and heard as little as possible, and more than once he asked in the presence of representatives of other colleges whether All Souls could "get away with it", if it were to build a hall of residence at a safe distance from the College, where the graduates might lead their own, self-contained lives. He doubted, in any case, whether the graduates would feel at ease dining with the fellows amidst the "mahogany and silver."

BY MID-AUGUST the counter-revolution was gathering momentum. Those who had voted for graduates grudgingly, or out of fear, now found a new courage and an inspired organiser. The pledges made to the Commission were about to be thrown overboard.

Need it be argued that All Souls, worth four million pounds, could have afforded the St. Antony's scheme had it so desired? In February, when testifying before the Commission, the Estates Bursar had stated quite plainly that if it were to cost £200,000 to build a hostel for graduates, "well, we can face that expenditure, and it is fortunate that we can." Eight months later he ruled out the St. Antony's scheme on account of the fact that the building would cost —£200,000. More than one fellow whose work is in the City criticised the Estates Bursar's report for its caution and pessimism. An additional £6,000 *p.a.* could have been saved from current expenditure without chopping off a single head, but this was quickly passed over. No emphasis was laid on the cuts which could be made in the present extravagant scale of All Souls' domestic life,[3] and nothing was said about the interesting system whereby All Souls subsidises the *private* entertainments of its fellows, academic and non-academic alike, to the tune of 67 per cent. In December 1964 the Estates Bursar had written: "Finally, may I say that I don't think that the College will be believed if it says that it cannot afford a graduate scheme."

The crunch came on 6 November. After a long and tense debate, the graduate scheme of 1965 went the way of the graduate scheme of 1922. The voting was 35–22. The defeat was total and definitive. The reformers were stunned, faintly incredulous, and sick at heart.

BUT IN ORDER to reject graduates, something else had to be improvised and hurriedly rushed before the Commission. Once again All Souls made smoke. The new Visiting Fellows project by which All Souls is now justifying itself to the University envisages bringing a small number of temporary visitors to the College. Some will be academics, some not; some will be partly paid for by All Souls, some will not. They will be housed two miles away in Iffley and they will no doubt devote most of their time to their private work.

In recommending the project, its leading proponent struck notes not heard for at least a year. Visiting Fellows, he stressed, "would not involve a major reorientation of fellows' time and commitments" in the way that graduates would. There would be no need for fellows to "exert themselves" to the same extent. In any case All Souls would bungle a graduate scheme because many of the fellows were incapable of teaching and poorly equipped to rise to the task. At the same time, this argument went on, many fellows did already teach pupils from other colleges; so why all the fuss?

Such direct appeals to inertia flickered from time to time, and then were indignantly denied. Although different fellows doubtless had different reasons for rejecting graduates, and although they no doubt convinced themselves that their actions were inspired by disinterested and rational motives, I have no doubt that there was a lowest common factor at work, and that it was closely associated with the promise of a quiet life. Naturally the principal arguments put

[3] Meals supplied without charge to fellows, and free college entertainments, cost £7,041 in 1964.

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forward were on quite a different key; the crux of the argument was the same as in January, that what the University really wanted was more supervisors (and once again it was forgotten that these could best be produced by watering the local garden).

On 18 November the Warden, now mightily relieved, wrote to Lord Franks, the President of the Commission, explaining in effect that the New Economic Policy was really Communism. "I know well," he wrote disarmingly, "the power of inertia in a College, and the strength of the desire to carry on with as little change as possible in the existing régime. Such feelings may have actuated some fellows throughout, consciously or unconsciously, but I am sure that the swing of feeling that took place during the year was due to something more positive than this." He went on: "It should be possible for us soon to have in residence two or three times the initial number" (six). All Souls is forever chewing the cud of its good intentions.[4] In any case by late 1967, when the project is scheduled to begin, all the batteries will once again have run down. For that eventuality a contingency clause has already been drafted:

> It will be required by Statute that there shall be not more than twenty Visiting Fellows at any one time, and not fewer than six, except when it shall appear to the Warden and Fellows that the financial position of the College makes it necessary to reduce the number below six for the time being.

In September, the proposal had been made that "In exceptional circumstances the College might also award (Visiting) Fellowships to those not in normal academic life...." In writing to Lord Franks, the Warden said nothing at all about the inclusion of non-academics among the Visiting Fellows (perhaps fearing that the Commission would not be impressed). But a week later he wrote to the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that "...there is a good chance of our visiting fellowships scheme being worked in such a way as to benefit both the College and the Foreign Office." Early in December the College, whose morale was now at its nadir (only two-thirds bothered to turn up), agreed that one third of the visitors should be recruited from the civil service, business, banking, etc. The scintillating dynamism now propelling All Souls towards new frontiers was reflected in the draft advertisement:

> Visiting Fellows will be entitled to free lunches and dinners in College. The College has available a limited amount of accommodation for Visiting Fellows, though it cannot undertake to provide this in any particular case.... In certain circumstances the College may make financial subventions to Visiting Fellows....

The leading opponents of graduates have not been long in revealing a sad lack of confidence in their own arguments. Having for many months spoken of the need for more teachers in certain peripheral subjects, they drafted a clause which reads: "Visiting Fellows may be elected from any field of study, but preference will normally be given to those working in disciplines already represented by the College...."[5]

I draw a dichotomy between reformers and opposition advisedly. Although the opposition has had to rustle up counter-reforms, its objective function has always been to head off genuine, long-term reform, *a change in structure and outlook*. The hard truth is that although the most persuasive opponents of graduates do believe in mild change, they succeeded in the end, with the Warden's blessing, not because of what they offered but because of what they undertook to destroy—the prospect of All Souls becoming a graduate College with collegiate responsibilities. Those many fellows who wanted only to stand still, agreed, for the sake of appearance, to step sideways.

This brought down the curtain on the period of internal reform. What, after two-and-a-half years, was the balance sheet?

It will be recalled that reform had been pursued on three fronts: additional research fellows; a building inside the College; and graduates. Moreover, these three wise men had been, in theory, guided by a single star: don't give your money away.

In one sector only has progress been made. Five distinguished Oxford scholars have been

[4] In challenging the graduate scheme, the opposition accepted the Estates Bursar's estimate that All Souls could afford to spend only £10,000 a year (which represents £200,000 in capital). The College has now decided to spend £100,000 (approximately) in converting a house at Iffley. This leaves a mere £5,000 *p.a.* for the visiting fellows themselves. Twenty of them would therefore receive an average of £250 *p.a.* each!

[5] Another clause, providing for consultation with the University, may or may not hold out hope of a more constructive policy of selection.

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elected to senior categories of fellowship. All Souls, however, makes only a minimal contribution to their stipends. In addition, four research fellows, supported by the College, have been elected—an achievement partly offset by the conspicuous failure to bring in the usual quota of academic "prize fellows" from below. There are nineteen research fellows mainly financed by the College in All Souls today; two years ago there were seventeen.

But what of the other sectors? Here the answer is cruel and simple: nothing. No graduates, no building.

And the guiding star? £88,000 has been given away.

The decision to build had been taken in June 1964. The Warden had opposed the project and spoken of his legal rights in the matter. Nevertheless, plans were commissioned. In January 1965 the College had before it a plan for a three-and-a-half storey vertical building, meeting the scale of the Hawksmoor kitchens, which preserved the full view of the Warden's Lodgings and of the trees in his garden. This particular plan was turned down, but the College reaffirmed its desire to build on the same site, despite the Warden's renewed references to his legal rights. The Building Committee was instructed to proceed at once to commission new plans.

This instruction was made without proviso, stipulation or ambiguity, even though it was known that a week later a vote—probably a positive vote—would be taken on the admission of graduates. Now it may be the case that the decision to incorporate graduates put a new complexion on the matter, and that it would have been prudent then to reconsider the overall pattern of expenditure. The fellows merely had to be reconvened and asked whether their instructions remained binding. But the Warden had strong feelings. For him the building meant scaffolding, noise, the intrusion of workmen, something new and tangible, something which would have to be filled with new men. Could he still have confidence that the College knew its own best interests? Its will, no doubt, was a distorted, aggregate will rather than the ideal general will. The Building Committee was not summoned and nothing was done. Two months later nothing was heard about the building during the March general meeting. When two junior voices (one of them my own) were raised inquisitively, the response from the throne was short and crushing. The questions were out of order (of course they weren't, since finance was being discussed). Furthermore, added the Warden sharply, the building had been shelved. Shelved! All but a few voices remained silent.

Obliged now to explain himself, the Warden said that not he, but the Building Committee, had decided to defer approaches to architects (which it naturally had no more right to do than had the Warden himself). In any case, the Warden was evidently determined not to budge. He would bury the building. The remarkable truth is that the College has never rescinded its decision and the Warden has never made any attempt to implement it. Nothing could be more representative of the confusion and despair in which so much All Souls business is shrouded.[6]

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS of All Souls are in the first place anatomical. Because its composition is heterogeneous, its central purpose, as its testimony to the Commission showed, is obscure and ambivalent.

Nowadays, few viable arguments can be brought in support of the types of non-academic fellowships which form an integral element of All Souls. It is *not* (as it is with Nuffield and St. Antony's) a question of co-operation between the theoretical and practical spheres; All Souls' Londoners have little or nothing to give the University in the way of professional experience, with the exception of the occasional seminar on foreign affairs and defence. It is true that a seven-year fellowship may in certain cases be of real help to a young man who, while not wishing to pursue an academic career, wants to continue higher studies, or to write, or simply to keep in touch with intellectual developments. But there is no reason why he should be a member of the Governing Body, and there is very rarely any reason why his fellowship should be renewed once he has found his outside feet. If the renowned nexus of power and intellect ever did add lustre to Oxford, it has long since ceased to do so.

The claim made to the Commission that "it has never yet been the case that the election of an 'academic' fellow . . . has been prevented by the existence of these classes of non-academic fellow . . ." is extremely problematical. The

[6] Since these words were written, All Souls has begun to contemplate building within the College *on a different site*. All honour to those now renewing the struggle. I shall be very surprised if a building ever materialises.

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Warden had always opposed the election of further research fellows on the grounds that the *overall* size of the College would become too large. Having lost the Ukraine in this battle, he may yet save the Urals. Not for nothing did one historian write in 1964: "I do not think it would be easy to justify a refusal to elect further fellows . . . simply in order to retain the present complement of non-academics." More recently an All Souls philosopher called his colleagues' attention to the fact that "Many of the non-academic fellows are an ornament to the College. . . . I cannot see that the continued membership on our Governing Body of people who are not active members of this or any other university . . . can be defensible."

There are some who contend that, man for man, the non-academics are more enlightened than the dons, particularly as their lives are the less affected by radical changes. As far as I can calculate, only eleven of the thirty-three dons (33%) present and voting on 6th November voted in favour of graduates. But eleven of the twenty-three non-academics (50%) present and voting, voted the same way.

If these figures are broken down further, two interesting facts emerge. First, the "prize fellows," those still in their twenties, were almost unanimous in their support for graduates, *i.e.* for genuine structural reform. Ten were in favour (although three were unable to vote), one against. Within this category, the academics voted 100% in favour. Thus opposition set in within the higher, more senior reaches, where vested interests are more entrenched. Secondly, the newly elected senior fellows voted against graduates without exception. New wine admires an old bottle. Also, newcomers, having visualised All Souls as a unique sanctuary, are appalled to find the demolition squads already at work on the foundations; but it is surely reasonable to hope that some of these new fellows had not yet grasped the urgent need for reform and revitalisation. They may yet do so.

. . .

But the burden of my thesis is this: that the present structure and composition of All Souls makes genuine reform by majority vote impossible. Even when resolutions are passed, nothing is done. To conclude from the most recent voting pattern that All Souls requires its non-academic element on the Governing Body is to fall into a crude empiricism. The situation has to be understood in its totality, in the light of the interpretation of structure, mind, and action. The very existence of the external category of fellows shields many of the Oxford ones from the rude winds of University life and from a sense of local accountability. It enables them to claim privileges otherwise unknown in the British academic community and to build shrines of immunity and narcissism where workshops ought to be.

The habitual physiological disorders from which All Souls suffers are already implicit in the narrative of events. The situation was precisely summed up recently by a fellow:

> All other colleges hold their meetings far more frequently than we do. . . . We hold ours less frequently, solely in order that the external fellows should be able to attend them regularly . . . . and the result . . . is that our meetings are inordinately long, that there is often not time to deal with all the business properly, and frequently people become exhausted and find it difficult to think coherently. . . .

Coherence presupposes cohesion. But a large number of fellows don't set eyes on one another from one general meeting to the next, from season to season. There can be no possibility of developing policy gradually, organically, integrally, through dialogue. Instead, small committees and cabals of active policy-makers compete for the last-minute allegiance of "Londoners" who turn up utterly unbriefed and out of touch.[7] The result in practice is that either decisions are taken in All Souls only to be rescinded later, or that decisions are deferred, with straw votes substituted for real ones.

All Souls is the most centrifugal of colleges. Between general meetings it falls apart. It disperses. It is the principle of absentee landlordism transferred to the academic world. In such circumstances the power of the executive—the Warden and the Bursars—is preponderant. For months at a time the business of the College rests in the hands of the Warden. Hence the quality of still-life. Certainly committees exist and meet; but the theory whereby committees are elected is in reality observed with about as much enthusiasm as the Russian tenets of inner-party democracy. Every year the fellows abdicate with a grunt: "The College agreed that members

[7] Of course that is the great tradition: the cream of the public schools, having been "taught to think" at Oxford and Cambridge, preside over conferences of wrangling experts before themselves delivering firm and lucid decisions. Knowledge is merely an obstacle to lucidity.

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(other than *ex-officio* and co-opted members of the committees)... set out in the list before the College should be reappointed...." From time to time a name may be added. Even so, the Warden finds that in a multiplicity of committees he must sooner or later run into the troublemakers—his reiterated preference is for a small, powerful College Council with wide executive powers. (Greater efficiency could more democratically be achieved by holding more frequent College meetings.)

The Head of any Oxford college can, if he so wishes, exert considerable influence in his own domain. But in All Souls this power is exaggerated by the structure of the College. Mr. Sparrow was elected Warden in 1952; he need not retire for a further ten years. Is it probable that any real change will be possible in the near future? The present Warden is profoundly wedded to the past. The whole atmosphere of modern university life, the professional approach, the decline of the gentleman amateur, the practice now widespread among dons known as marriage (hence his delightful quip about young fellows giving up All Souls for one body), the opening up of higher education to wider strata of the population, the rude entry of Jimmy Porter, the notion of accountability to the state, the replacement of the old classical syllabus by new, more functional subjects—he gives the clear impression of finding all this distasteful. He rejects it, as previously he rejected the Vice-Chancellorship of the University, when the rota system pointed to All Souls. Splendid as the Augustan aesthetic must have been, the eighteenth century cannot readily understand the twentieth. One can confidently expect Mr. Sparrow to defend his values to the last ditch; after all, is he there to "preside over a liquidation"?

ALL SOULS can be eloquent in its own defence. The College told the Commission: "There is therefore a place in Oxford for a College in which it is recognised that research has the first claim on a fellow's time and in which he does not have to depend financially upon remuneration for teaching." Yes, but a place for *whom*? One of those who argued most forcefully that many of the fellows of All Souls were unsuited to teaching has himself pointed out in a recent article that research centres to which dons can be seconded for generous sabbatical periods are justified only if these privileged men show an even higher commitment to their students during the normal course of their careers. Quite so. But why should All Souls be held immune from this excellent principle? A Junior, Senior, or Special Research Fellow of All Souls is installed in practice if not in theory for life. He is there to stay. If he chooses to vegetate, he can. (The contention that *over a protracted period of time* a man's research work benefits from a lack of contact with pupils is in most cases the reverse of the truth.) If there are scholars in All Souls who really cannot teach, or deserve a rest in the last years of their career, they can be numbered on the fingers of one hand.

There are only two viable alternatives open to All Souls: either to make all its research fellowships short-term ones (three, five, or seven years); or, alternatively, to incorporate into the College students of one kind or another. Either way, the Londoners must be jettisoned from the Governing Body.

MANY IN OXFORD regard All Souls with unconcealed derision, and attempts to reform it as intrinsically absurd: one might as well try and turn the Tower of London into a railway station. Yet any impartial scrutiny will show that this College contains the greatest concentration of untapped intellectual talent and energy in Oxford. Nothing could be more erroneous than to visualise All Souls as a community of doddering clubmen. There lies the tragedy; the organism defeats its members; the tentacles of emptiness sap the individual's energy and distort his judgment.

This circle is a particularly vicious one. A change of attitude presupposes a change of structure, and a change of structure demands a change of attitude. The rebels must break free of the shadows and silences. Reform can no longer be an occasional, weekend pastime. The assumption must be challenged that the professor who changes his mind most frequently, and who moves in the greatest number of directions simultaneously, is the one most faithful to the vows of his order. Cohesion is required, and some courage. No one likes to make the first move; no one relishes the prospect of being discovered alone in the throne-room wearing nothing but a *papier mâché* sword. Yet kings are lonely figures. History suggests that once a revolution has solved its horizontal problems, the vertical ones take care of themselves.

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Robert Penn Warren

Tale of Time

I. What Happened

It was October. It was the Depression. Money
Was tight. Hoover was not a bad
Man, and my mother
Died—and God
Kept on, and keeps on,
Trying to tie things together, but

It doesn't always work, and we put the body
Into the ground, dark
Fell soon, but not yet, and oh,
Have you seen the last oak leaf of autumn, high,
Not yet fallen, stung
By last sun to a gold
Painful beyond the pain one can ordinarily
Get? What

Was there in the interim
To do, the time being the time
Between the clod's *chunk* and
The full realisation, which commonly comes only after
Midnight? That

Is when you will go to the bathroom for a drink of water.
You wash your face in cold water.
You stare at your face in the mirror, wondering
Why now no tears come, for
You had been proud of your tears, and so
You think of fucking, of
Fluid ejected, of
Water deeper than daylight, of
The sun-dappled dark of deep woods and blood on green fern frond, of
The shedding of blood, and you will doubt
The significance of all your own experience. Oh,
Desolation, oh if
You were rich.
You try to think of a new way to fuck. Is this

Grief? You pray
To God that this be grief, for
You want to grieve.

This, you reflect, is no doubt the typical syndrome.

But all this will come later.
There will also be the dream of the eating of human flesh.

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II. The Mad Druggist

I come back to try to remember the faces she saw every day.
On the street she saw them, at school, in the stores, at church.
They are not here now, they have been withdrawn, are put away.
They are all gone now, and have left me in the lurch.

I am left in the lurch because they were part of her.
Not clearly remembering them, I have therefore lost that much
Of her, and if I do remember,
I remember the lineaments only beyond the ice-blur and soot-smutch

Of my boyhood contempt, for I had not thought they were real.
The real began where the last concrete walk gave out
And the smart-weed crawled in the cracks, where the last privy canted to spill
Over flat in the rank-nourished burdock, and would soon, no doubt,

If nobody came to prop it, which nobody would do.
The real began there: field and woods, stone and stream began
Their utterance, and the fox, in his earth, knew
Joy, and the hawk, like philosophy, hung without motion, high, where the sun-blaze of wind ran.

Now, far from Kentucky, planes pass in the night, I hear them, and all, all is real.
Some men are mad, but I know that delusion may be one name for truth.
The faces I cannot remember lean at my bed-foot, and grin fit to kill,
For they share a knowledge I did not have in my youth.

But one I remember, the old druggist they carried away.
They put him in Hoptown, where he kept on making his list—
The same list he had on the street when he stopped my mother to say:
"Here they are, Miss Ruth, the folks that wouldn't be missed,

"Or this God-durn town would be lucky to miss,
If when I fixed a prescription I just happened to pour
Something in by way of improvement." Then leaned in that grey way of his:
"But you—you always say something nice when you come in my store."

In Hoptown he worked on his list, which now could have nothing to do
With the schedule of deaths continuing relentlessly,
To include, in the end, my mother, as well as that list-maker who
Had the wit to see that she was too precious to die:

A fact some in the street had not grasped—nor the attending physician, nor God, nor I.

III. Answer Yes or No

Death is only a technical correction of the market.
Death is only the transfer of energy to a new form.
Death is only the fulfilment of a wish.

Whose wish?

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Robert Penn Warren

IV. The Interim

(*a*)

Between the clod and the midnight
The time was.
There had been the public ritual and there would be the private realisation,
And now the time was, and

In that time the heart cries out for coherence.
Between the beginning and the end, we must learn the nature of being
In order, in the end, to be, so

Our feet, in first dusk, took
Us over the railroad tracks, where
Sole-leather ground drily against cinders, as when
Tears will not come. She

Whom we now sought was old. Was
Sick. Was dying. Was
Black. Was.
Was: and was that enough? Is
Existence the adequate and only target for total reverence of the heart?

We would see her who,
Also, had held me in her arms.
She had held me in her arms,
And I had cried out in the wide day-blaze of the world. But

Now was a time of endings.

What is love?

(*b*)

Tell me what love is, for
The harvest moon, gold, heaved
Over the far woods which were,
On the black land, black, and swagged over
The hill-line. That light
Lay gold on the roofs of nigger-town, and the niggers
Were under the roofs, and
The room smelled of urine.
A fire burned on the hearth:
Too hot, and there was no ventilation, and
You have not answered my question.

I do not want to have to repeat the question.

(*c*)

Propped in a chair, lying down she
Could not breathe, dying
Erect, breath
Slow from the hole of the mouth, that
Black aperture in the blackness which
Was her face, but
How few of them are really
Black, but she
Is black, and life
Spinning out, spilling out, from
The holes of the eyes: and the eyes are
Burning mud beneath a sky of nothing.
The eyes bubble like hot mud with the expulsion of vision.

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Tale of Time

I lean, I am the
Nothingness which she
Sees.

Her hand rises in the air.
It rises like revelation.
It moves but has no motion, and
Around it the world flows like a dream of drowning.
The hand touches my cheek.
The voice says: *You.*

I am myself.

The hand has brought me the gift of myself.

(*d*)

I am myself, and
Her face is black like cave-blackness, and over
That blackness now hangs death, grey
Like cobweb over the blackness of a cave, but
That blackness which she is, is
Not deficiency like cave-blackness, but is
Substance.
The cobweb shakes with the motion of her breath.

My hand reaches out to part that greyness of cobweb.

My lips touch the cheek, which is black.
I do not know whether the cheek is cold or hot, but I
Know that
The temperature is shocking.
I press my lips firmly against that death.
I try to pray.

The flesh is dry, and tastes of salt.

My father has laid a twenty-dollar bill on the table.
He, too, will kiss that cheek.

(*e*)

We stand in the street of nigger-town.
The moon is high now and the roofs gleam.
My brother says: *The whole place smelled of urine.*
My father says: *Twenty dollars—oh, God, what*
Is twenty dollars when
The world is the world it is!

The night freight is passing.
The couplings clank in the moonlight, the locomotive
Labours on the grade.
The freight disappears beyond the coal chute westward, and
The red caboose-light disappears into the distance of the continent.
It will move all night into distance.

My sister is weeping under the sky.
The sky is enormous in the absoluteness of moonlight.

These are factors that must be considered in making any final estimate.

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(*f*)

There is only one solution. If
You would know how to live, here
Is the solution, and under
My window, when ice breaks, the boulder
Groans in the gorge, the foam swirls, and in
The intensity of the innermost darkness of steel
The crystal blooms like a star, and at
Dawn I have seen the delicate print of the coon-hand in silt by the riffle.

Hawk-shadow sweetly sweeps the grain.
I would compare it with that fugitive thought which I can find no word for.

(*g*)

Planes pass in the night. I turn
To the right side if the beating
Of my own heart disturbs me.
The sound of water flowing is
An image of Time, and therefore
Truth is all and
Must be respected, and
On the other side of the mirror into which
At morning, you will stare, History

Gathers, condenses, crouches, breathes, waits. History
Stares forth at you through the eyes which
You think are the reflection of
Your own eyes in the mirror.
Ah, Monsieur du Miroir!

Your whole position must be reconsidered.

(*h*)

But the solution: You
Must eat the dead.
You must eat them completely, bone, blood, flesh, gristle, even
Such hair as can be forced. You
Must undertake this in the dark of the moon, but
At your plenilune of anguish.

Immortality is not impossible,
Even joy.

V. What Were You Thinking, Dear Mother?

What were you thinking, a child, when you lay,
At the whip-poor-will hour, lost in the long grass,
And sun, beyond the dark cedars, sank?
You went to the house. The lamps were now lit.

What did you think when the evening dove mourned,
Far off in those sober recesses of cedar?
What relevance did your heart find in that sound?
In lamplight, your father's head bent at his book.

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Tale of Time

What did you think when the last saffron
Of sunset faded beyond the dark cedars,
And on noble blue now the evening star hung?
You found it necessary to go to the house,

And found it necessary to live on,
In your bravery and your joyous secret,
Into our present maniacal century,
In which you gave me birth, and in

Which I, in the public and private mania,
Have lived, but remember that once I,
A child, in the grass of that same spot, lay,
And the whip-poor-will called, beyond the dark cedars.

VI. Insomnia

(*a*)

If to that place. Place of grass.
If to hour of whip-poor-will, I.
If I now, not a child. To.
If now I, not a child, should come to
That place, lie in
That place, in that hour hear
That call, would
I rise,
Go?

Yes, enter the darkness. Of.
Darkness of cedars, thinking
You there, you having entered, sly,
My back being turned, face
Averted, or
Eyes shut, for
A man cannot keep his eyes steadily open
Sixty years.

I did not see you when you went away.

Darkness of cedars, yes, entering, but what
Face, what
Bubble on dark stream of Time, white
Glimmer un-mooned? Oh,
What age has the soul, what
Face does it wear, or would
I meet that face that last I saw on the pillow, pale?
I recall each item with remarkable precision.

Would the sweat now be dried on the temples?

(*b*)

What would we talk about? The dead,
Do they know all, or nothing, and
If nothing, does
Curiosity survive the long unravelment? Tell me

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What they think about love, for I
Know now at long last that the living remember the dead only
Because we cannot bear the thought that they
Might forget us. Or is
That true? But look—
But no, no light here penetrates by which
You might see the photographs I keep in my wallet. Anyway,
I shall try to tell you all that has happened to me.

Though how can I tell you when I do not even know?

And as for you, and all the interesting things
That must have happened to you and that
I am just dying to hear about—

But would you confide in a balding stranger
The intimate secret of death?

(*c*)

Or does the soul have many faces, and would I,
Pacing the cold hypothesis of Time, enter
Those recesses to see, white,
Whiter than moth wing, the child's face
Glimmer in cedar gloom, and so I
Reach out that I may offer
What protection I can, saying,
"I am older than you will ever be," for it
Is the child who once
Lay lost in the long grass, sun sinking.

Reach out, saying: "My hand—
Take my hand, for it's dark, and my dear,
You should never have come in the woods when it's dark,
But I'll take you back home now, they're waiting."
And we come to wood's edge, there stand.

I watch you move across the open space.
You move under the paleness of new stars.
You move toward the house, and one instant,

A door opening, I see
Your small form black against the light, and the door
Is closed, and I

Hear night crash down a million stairs.
In the ensuing silence
My breath is difficult.

Heat lightning ranges the far horizon.
That is also worth mentioning.

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Tale of Time

(*d*)

Come,
Crack crust, striker
From darkness, and let seize—let what
Hand seize, oh!—my heart, and compress
The heart till, pain past, joy from it
Spurt like a grape, and I will grind
Teeth on flint tongue till
The flint screams. Truth
Is all. But

I must learn to speak it
Slowly, in a whisper.

Yes, truth, in the end, can never be spoken aloud,
For the future is always unpredictable.
So is the past, therefore

At wood's edge I stand, and,
Over the horizon, heat lightning
Ripples the black sky. After
The lightning, as the eye
Adjusts to the new dark,
The stars are, again, born.

They are born one by one.

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Jacques Barzun

Venus at Large

Sexuality and the Limits of Literature

THE STUDENT OF LITERATURE is instinctively loath to set theoretical limits to the art he studies, and so, surely, does the writer feel about the art he practises—unless he is a mere follower of convention. But in recognising this axiomatic freedom, it is one thing to say that sexuality, like any other human power, deserves limitless literary expression; it is quite another to say that literature should find room for ever more detailed descriptions of the sex act. And it tends to be the second proposition that modern readers and writers maintain as the test of freedom and as the gateway to further discoveries in literature.

The confusion of these two views is in itself a subject for inquiry; for no one, probably, would raise the question of limits if *sexuality* were the element that literature had to accommodate. But the element is in fact *sex*. Common speech makes the distinction quite unconsciously, and it tells us that what is under review, what is beginning to raise critical doubts, is the representation in words of actual or imaginable copulation.

In consequence, "limits" can take on two meanings: Have we had enough verbal sex by now, so that it is time to desist? Or if this quantitative limit seems trivial or unenforceable, has literature gone as far as it can, or should, in its study or exploration of sex? As to the first, there is some evidence that the public is getting weary of what has become for every novelist who wants to be read the *scène à faire*. Readers are beginning to feel unduly bed-ridden, and fatigue is in itself a criticism. To answer the other question, whether the literary art has found natural limits in the subject of sexual activity, one must begin by asking why coitus entered literature in the first place.

CLEARLY, PEOPLE KNEW MORE than the rough outlines of the physics of sexual reproduction before our novels began to descant upon it. In Western civilisation since the Greeks the greater part of literature is erotic in motive and contents. From Helen of Troy to Isolde and the Princesse de Clèves to Tess of the d'Urbervilles, the presence of desire is not overlooked, nor are its physical expression and consequences blinked: couples embrace, run away to live together, idolise the visible body, and produce offspring. These are not the acts of innocents, and we should no longer labour under the delusion, born of the anti-Victorian crusade, that about forty years ago a few bold spirits with pen in hand discovered the genitalia.

Still, it will be said, it was those bold spirits who put them within the covers of freely circulating books; and it is the wish to do so and the wish to have this done that we must explain before we can measure the limits—if any—within which this exhibition is aesthetically fit and spiritually good. What are we actually given in those pages of modern books at which the library copies open all by themselves? There is, by and large, a standardised sexual act for literary use: a brief conversation leads to a couch or bed; an undressing follows, of the woman by the man or of the woman by herself; passing attention is then given to some physical detail of her body, not necessarily beautiful or attractive (this shows the force of desire), after which the act takes place almost directly and, judging by the prose, at a military speed. The report of sensations and responses is invariably from the woman's point of view, though occasionally the act is seen or interpreted from the man's. In most cases the enterprise is successful, despite the lack of preliminaries such as the

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works of theory deem imperative; in most cases no thought is given to consequences—a careless ease which flouts the entry in the Kinsey Report "*pregnancy, fear of*"; in most cases, there is no repetition of the act, or indeed any sort of artistic conclusion, unless orgasm itself and a sketchy resumption of clothes are to be taken as such.

As literary realism all this is most unsatisfactory. We are brought to infer that any suggestion of realism is accidental. What is intended is symbolism. The modern sex act in print, which causes the police and the puritan so much pain, is only a fable, a device to correct this or that deficiency of our upbringing and culture. At first, depicting sexual intercourse was a reminder to the public of what preoccupies human society. Not only the Edwardians, who made the revolution, but the late Victorian novelists themselves, felt that the absence from literature of direct signs showing mankind sexually driven was an absurd and arbitrary exclusion. The barrier finally broke and the sexual obsession is with us, obsessively reproduced. Why it should stay there is not so clear.

WHENEVER a marked change occurs in the conventions of literature, one may question whether the place accorded the new topic is a late recognition of its intrinsic importance or an exaggeration due to external causes. After all, the battle against Victorian primness was won a good many years ago. Why go on battering the open door? The answer lies in the fact of such external causes: they changed literature and are still at work. Not the pressure of industrialised urban life alone, but its combination with self-consciousness felt as a disease impelled writers from the outset of the nineteenth century to make of sexuality a symbol and an argument. In Blake sexuality denotes freedom, energy, and joy. In Goethe it typifies the dark forces of nature. In Balzac it is for the first time a compulsive manifestation of ego, will, ambition, and fatalism (*Peau de Chagrin, Cousine Bette*). Stendhal studies (but also enjoys) the fantasies and illusions of the sexual force; and Baudelaire, crying out against vulgarity, moralism, and the *déjà vu*, turns to abnormal sexuality as a means of protest and underground resistance for the self in its war with society. Behind them all stands Rousseau, whose confessional principle breaks with that of the church and confronts mankind not with the slogan "Back to Nature," as the textbooks foolishly say, but with the riddle "What *is* Nature?". After him the naturalism of science is matched by the naturalism of literature, which tries through fiction to discover the roots of man.

At first, then, sexuality and, later, sex are literary devices to restore respect for instinct, to tap a source of power which can at once abate the disease of extreme self-consciousness and counteract the stupefying effect of the world of machines. For sex is in a curious way the most and the least personal of man's activities. Used in the novel, it could rebuild the whole man and show his oneness with all men. Again, if literature was to criticise life and lead the revolt against convention, it needed a new element that was indeed elemental and yet was instantly felt as intimate and defining. That element was the sexual, and since in art what is novel in conception requires a striking embodiment, sexuality was bound to move steadily towards its ultimate form in the sex scene.

IN ENGLISH FICTION, the great growling presence was kept in the background much longer than on the Continent. True, a general awareness was shown in the staggering number of "proper" novels that hinged on seduction, but the temptation itself is always hurried over, and one has to wait till Bradley Headstone in *Our Mutual Friend* to meet the obsessive force face to face. Meanwhile *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* are alive with physical passion, and even though Thackeray hems and haws about Becky Sharp, he is dying to tell all. Hardy alone (if we except the poets Coventry Patmore and Meredith in *Modern Love*) comes out with the facts in *Tess* and demonstrates in *Jude* that sexuality is so strong that it can, by repulsion, make a woman jump out of the window.

But even by the mid-nineties the English mind was not ready to accept calmly the revelation of what it knew very well. George Moore's *Esther Waters* caused a scandal, Zola's publisher was jailed, and the virulence of the press, the law, and public opinion in the trials of Oscar Wilde proved that the repressive effort, though now desperate, was still potent. Nor should we forget that in Germany at the same time (Sudermann) and in France even earlier (*Madame Bovary*), the guardians of society had tried suppression by law. Ibsen's struggles in Scandinavia, too well known to recount, owed much of their violence to the correct suspicion

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that the playwright was vindicating sexuality in *Ghosts*, and if not free love, at least freedom for the instinct of love, in *Hedda Gabler* and elsewhere.

THESE ENTANGLEMENTS of literature with public opinion and the law are not extraneous to the discussion of literary limits. For they make clear a fundamental point: the advent of sexuality in fiction marks primarily a social emancipation, not a literary or emotional one. To be sure, the freedom claimed by the artist to write as he pleases looks like purely literary business. Actually, freedom for the artist is but another way of attacking bourgeois standards; Bohemia *versus* the conventions, art for life's sake. Hence the moral overturn at the dawn of the twentieth century belongs to political history more than to the history of art. Indeed political revolution is almost always linked with sexual revolt. The Victorians knew this so well that one of their motives in repressing certain thoughts and words was to keep down the masses and avert revolution. The masses went on being ribald and loose, but the upper crust held for a hundred years. When between 1900 and 1914 the great tide of change that had been gathering strength for forty years swept over every part of European culture, literature was only the vehicle for anarchism and socialism, bohemianism and feminism. What literature celebrated directly and through the symbols of sexuality was the rise of the masses, the women, and the artists.

These last two had a special significance as the chosen vessels of the instinctual life, which in a world of machines and make-believe emerges as the truest means of salvation. This belief was something apart from the love of primitivism evinced by old civilisations, and it drew unexpected support from science. Sixty years of industry had thrown up, among other victims, an inordinate number of misfits—neurotics, hysterics, paranoiacs, schizophrenics. Clearly, the machine and the moral code were pressing down too hard on the instincts. Charcot amid his eccentrics at La Salpétrière offered the diagnosis for hysteria that it was *toujours la chose génitale*. Freud shortly came out with his epoch-making hypothesis of Libidinous Man, and Krafft-Ebing studied and published the pathology of the sexual instinct. Clinical theory thus met and joined the intimations of literature reinforced by philosophy—Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Nietzsche, and Samuel Butler. It was at this point that the literary use of sexuality shifted from simply promoting social liberation to attempting individual, that is, emotional liberation.

THE FORERUNNER HERE was Butler in *The Way of All Flesh*, in which the discovery of sex aids the transformation of seemingly irrelevant feelings and finally disposes of the tyrannical family. There is nothing like this in Zola who, though he is the poet of the Id, does not even in *Germinal* present sexuality as healthful, but rather as Desire the Destroyer. It was a full generation after Butler, and evidently under his inspiration, that Maugham showed where the social and sexual liberations led. *Of Human Bondage* is in a sense the counterpart of the revolt. The hero enslaved by lust resists it fiercely, but it is no longer from moral scruples, it is from the strongest intellectual and aesthetic emotions. By 1915, then, the Id takes the fictional guise in which the whole century now knows it: an autonomous force. No doubt, it had already acted as such in Balzac, in Flaubert's last novel (see the peacock scene in *Pécuchet*), in all the works of Zola, in Mirbeau, in Schnitzler, and even in E. M. Forster. But the simpler, more insistent demonstration in Maugham, at the threshold of the latest period, makes the lesson unmistakable.

ONE MUST SAY "at the threshold," because by that date the literary sex act had not yet been performed in public. The line of asterisks used by Elinor Glyn and her tribe to mark the passage from one room to another and from banter to felicity had only just been patented. It took more than sultry novels, it took the first World War, to make the transition from sexuality to sex. That is, men and women the world over had first to be torn loose from their homes and habits, their ambitions and their fears, their notions and their clothes before they could enter into a new set of feelings—feelings at variance with the old religious dogmas and contrary to the assumption that the surrounding world is solidly based and its code enduring.

In that palpably existential situation of the 1920s, literature, particularly the novel, was led to devise its new sexual symbolism on principles both new and old. The doctrine of life-likeness, which was not new, said: copulation

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is frequent and ubiquitous, why conceal it? Add a due measure of it to the other ingredients of the slice of life. Next, the movement of ideas caught up with the novelist and informed him that Freud had brought forth twenty years before a new man who must be "studied" in literary form. His compulsions, difficulties, and powers in the arena of sexual encounters must be caught in the act, from the stream of consciousness virtually to that of the gonads. In between, all the appropriate gestures must be recorded.

The new opportunities seemed endless, for the sexual imagination of the author as man or woman was necessarily involved, and that imagination is luxuriant in spite of all rebuffs. Finally came the employment of the sexual act (or its subdivisions) as metaphor, myth, allegory, and sermon. These do not exclude realism, as we see in Molly Bloom's soliloquy, and they permit the adaptation of physical facts, at best circumscribed, to the purposes of poetry. Vivid sexual imagery has dominated modern verse from the satiric passages in *Prufrock* and *The Waste Land* to the efforts in student magazines, where protests against life and society take the form of anatomical similes. And the thighs and breasts and other generalised intimacies that enliven dour juvenile metaphysics afford vicarious sexual satisfaction as well.

THAT THERE IS NEED of this satisfaction is shown not only by the sheer amount of explicit sex in modern literature high and low, but also by the emphatic, brutal quality of most of it. The words used, the things done, suggest a tremendous impatience—not a surge of passion but a frantic thrust for relief. Such sexual anxiety is kept up, undoubtedly, by the effect upon the senses of advertising, a sub-literary *genre* which is no longer so crude that it cannot work a spell even on sophisticated minds. Mr. Erich Kuby has aptly shown in *Rosemarie* how logical it is that the mysterious but manifest damaging of sexuality by industrial life should be made up for through a "sexualisation of the masses by optical stimulation." But advertising is designed to create or inflame desire, not satisfy it. Hence the relief proffered in poetry and prose, which seem to say: "Down with all the teasing and tantalising! Here is what you do and how it feels...." Some of these portrayals, when they are not violent or self-centred, are meant to be exemplary, not to say pedagogic. Whether it is Mr. Mickey Spillane taking time away from murder to make his hero tenderly examine his wife's rotundities (thus answering Faulkner's demand that American husbands should caress their cars less and their wives more), or whether it is Mrs. Doris Lessing keeping a Golden Notebook on the interesting variations of every internal and external feature of love-making, the novel pursues its educational task and, by its willing elaboration of the factual, furthers the fleeting joys we find in the echoes of sex in poetry.

THIS BEING SO, one might suppose that literature was resuming one of its ancient roles, that of mirroring a pan-sexual world. In such a world the wonderful generalities of the fourth book of Lucretius would be made particular and pleasing. But this is not so. At the London trial of *Lady Chatterley* for obscenity, it was remarkable how many of the literary witnesses interpreted the book as an allegory of a desiccated world. To these critics, industrial England still remained more real than the gamekeeper's woods. Again, insofar as one can judge the effect of sexualised literature on its readers, themselves depicted in other works, the sexual tension is great in individuals but weak between partners, which is the very contradiction of sex. Out of this contradiction come the innumerable studies and reports (by which I mean novels) that deal with sexual maladjustment. The phrase denotes sex without sexuality and its cause is not obscure. Ancient literature was gay about sex, except perhaps when its awesome universal purpose came into view. The rest of the time sex was a comedy freely though not obsessively witnessed. In *Lysistrata*, Aristophanes gives no sense that he is daring in his use of sexual images and events to develop his theme and cause laughter. The processions of women in the *Thesmophoriazusae* carry leather phalluses ten feet long and tied in knots. In the novelists and satirists down to Petronius, the joke is on, and with, the lovers, whose mutual acts are envied and derided all at once. It is delight mixed with difficulty but no strain.

With us the mood is opposite. We are not awed. We are solemn or complaining and cannot be anything else. And "us" here means the literary world as far back as 1800—the apogee of western civilisation and of its discontents. From Aristophanes to the *Contes Drôlatiques* is one tradition; from *La Cousine Bette* to *An American Dream* is another. The dividing line clearly

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shows that it is not Christianity as such that has desexualised man's view of the world. Even when demonic, as in the medieval story of *Mary of Nijmegen*, sexuality is acknowledged and the sin is first enjoyed. The last word has not been said about the causes of Christian puritanism, nor is this the place to say it. But one may point out that the same *Golden Bough* which helped revive in modern men of letters the appreciation of myth and the value of primitive feelings, also reports on the pre-Christian cults of Diana, Astarte, and Cybele, whose male votaries unmanned themselves by mutilation. There is evidence, besides, that the Christians' hostility to women and sex after a period of possibly carnal love feasts—the normal revolutionary phase—was due to a political and social anti-feminism, compounded with a revulsion from the sexual aggressiveness that women in high civilisations develop along with their other rights.

In our time, among the many parallels with the early Christian state of mind, we find literature reflecting a similar counter-revolution of sex, which is: the homosexual glorified. Until just now the actualities of this subject seemed difficult to portray in fiction. But as these lines are being written a recently-published first novel called *Totem-Pole* by Mr. Sanford Friedman (Dutton, New York) can be cited as having made the attempt. It depicts the hero's erotic development through his sexual identification with animals, and that development leads him to homosexual love graphically yet discreetly rendered.

At this point, it would seem that the limits of literature had been reached, in the sense that we have seen if not everything, at least every kind of thing. In any art, a time comes when amplification and variation are still possible but nothing new results. Are we at that stage and, if we are, does this position permit us to summarise and judge? Why not? at worst the attempt can be dismissed as premature.

The limits of one sort of sexualised literature have certainly been reached in Norman Mailer's *American Dream*, I mean the literature of realism. The hero's motiveless performances with women in that book seem designed, as several critics have said, chiefly to flatter the author's ego. Life and the Id are not in it; and one has only to compare an earlier work, *Time of Her Time*, to see the difference between credible sex scenes, however tendentious, and a sheer phantasmagoria of sex. In this latter wild genre, reminiscent of Rabelais though without his gaiety, there is also nothing more to do. Henry Miller has established by massive production a monopoly it would be foolhardy to compete with. In him one gets the full range, from the disagreeables of perfunctory fornication in the early works to the vicarious rewards of the easily pleased in the later ones. The reader who wishes can "identify" and almost believe that he is Frank Harris.

Do possibilities perhaps remain in the literary use of sex for preachments against absurd society, bourgeois convention, and the cankering dullness of modern life? This path too is blocked off by massive works. Joyce began piling them up, and nearly half a century of incessant fictional denunciation down to *The Ginger Man* has put the point beyond the reach of forgetfulness. The instinctual life is held in honour, and so is the bohemian artist, the tramp, the Panurge. The organised world is despised; the criminal Genet achieves literary sainthood; and there is no devil's advocate, no vocal opposition that even dreams of defending the civilised life.

There is then but one other subject for literature to treat through sex that might be considered unexhausted, and that is sexuality. Have the modern generations learned from the sex in their novels all there is to know about sexuality? Well, they seem to be quite familiar with its aberrations, inversions, and concomitants. Colloquial talk makes free with masochism and with sadism, even when only plain cruelty is meant. The sin of repression, the charms of incest, the sexual interpretation of dreams, and the belief that the foundation of character is laid by giving and taking orgasms are the main points of doctrine. If all this amounts to a fair knowledge of sexuality, then we are well taught, and literature has done its utmost.

But one cannot help noticing that the understanding of sexuality sought by modern man is also fed by expository literature, and perhaps better fed, even when that literature does not profess to be scientific. To read Colin Wilson's *Origins of the Sexual Impulse* gives more information and supplies fuller nuances than to read his *Sex Diary of Gerard Sorme*, entertaining as that fiction is. Again, the survey by Jeannette Foster of *Sex Variant Women in Literature* shows how repetitious and inconclusive is all

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this novelising of psycho-sexual fact. One is thus brought to acknowledge the great limitation of sex in portraying sexuality. Sex—that is to say the particulars of the act—is an inescapably trite and insignificant event for literature. The failure of *Candy* as a parody suggests that there is in serious sex nothing to exaggerate.

Sexuality is on the contrary the very atmosphere in which all literature breathes and lives. But sexuality can be made palpable in thousands of ways, ancient, modern, and still to be discovered. There is surely more to the sexual instinct and its derivatives than the rapid mechanical transaction we have been given as its sum and summit. There are tendernesses and hesitancies, sensations and fantasies that are not of the readily nameable sort, and the language for them does not as yet exist. It is the business of art to create it. Literature need not go back to the reticence of the past in order to find both direct and allusive ways of recreating sexuality. But it must first understand that the single kiss in *The Golden Bowl* suffices *with the rest* to establish the intense sexuality of that novel, whereas many a modern work that might qualify as a *coitus uninterruptus* is frigid.

IT HAS BEEN ARGUED—most recently by Mr. Wayland Young in *Eros Denied*—that the impasse we have reached about sex in life and letters is due to the rejection of the common words and phrases, neither technical nor euphemistic, that relate to the sexual act. And we are urged to rehabilitate them for all spiritual and literary purposes. This is to mistake the reason why these words are rejected and why words will not help reinvigorate sex. The words are rejected because they are so widely used in other contexts where they express nothing but hate and contempt. This usage is a fatal bar to their recovery, for it is otherwise easy to recover plain words: *leg* and *pants* were rescued without difficulty from synonymy with *limb* and *inexpressibles* when the Victorian mode died. But *fuck* will remain profane because its multitudinous users make it so. This is what D. H. Lawrence understood so well, and why by a stroke of genius he made the gamekeeper speak sex to Lady Chatterley mostly in dialect—just enough strangeness to provide distance without pedantry. Recourse to scientific jargon, which nearly all writers at times fall into, is the worst deadener. Storytelling is not compatible with references to *labia minora* and Bartholin's glands, such as we find for instance in William Gibson's *The Web*, or to the synapses which once held such an attraction for Arthur Koestler.

The grounds for these assertions are that the modern novel relies on style for force and verisimilitude, and style is inseparable from diction. In the neo-classic centuries, which were fond of pornography, the vocabulary of sex followed the example of poetry: it was metaphorical and periphrastic. From Carew's *Rapture* in verse to *The Memoirs of Fanny Hill*, all the necessary pictures are drawn by the authors with the kid gloves of analogy and trope. But Wordsworth put an end to all this, so that even Byron had to forgo appropriate descriptions in *Don Juan* and the story-tellers of our day struggle ineffectually with the same half-dozen terms, all unsatisfactory.

YET WHEN ONE REFLECTS on this limitation of literature, it is seen as general and not restricted to sex. Rather, it affects all the senses but sight and hearing, and such senses more especially as they relate to the body and its appetites. In short, the language itself seems to deny literature certain explorations which are conceivable but not compelling. One might ask, for instance, why the mishaps and *voluptés* of ingestion, digestion, and excretion, equally important with sex, had never been treated in literature. (Joyce's brief vision of Bloom at stool hardly counts.) Theoretically here is a wide open field crowded with potential gluttons and dyspeptics. But the vocabulary and the literary enthusiasm are lacking. There is much eating and drinking in Dickens, but it is the materials, it is roast beef and milk-punch, that attract us. And drunkenness is always portrayed from the objective, social, usually comic, point of view, never from the subjective and physiological.

Like the appetites, the sufferings of the body will not furnish literature. In Homer, it is true, a number of passages tell us that "the spear went crashing in among his white teeth and cut through the root of his tongue, coming out under his chin," but there are not so many such lines as one thinks, that impression itself being the result of our distaste. Obviously, these exact details of battle interested the peace-ridden listeners, as among us, *pari passu*, the details of sexual intercourse. Only an anatomist is fascinated by Shakespeare's "Out, vile jelly!" in the blinding of Gloucester. The other fifteen

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allusive lines are more than enough for the common reader.

What disqualifies for literature the possible literalism about eating and dying is not that it would be shocking and painful—great literature holds for its fit readers much worse shocks and pains. The disqualifying element is that the pain or the sensual delight portrayed is of a kind to call for action—help to the wounded, participation in the love-making—and this destroys all chances of imaginative realisation. The slow death of Prince Andrey in *War and Peace* is literature because it is an affair of the mind and the feelings, not the senses. We understand full well that it is caused by a bodily condition. But if those many pages were given over to the pathology of the case, we could not sit still and read about it. We would want to act, substitute ourselves for the patient, or despatch him to put an end to his sufferings and ours.

WE ARE DRIVEN to the same conclusion about sex in literature. Since sexuality is of our very being, sex cannot be called illegitimate, immoral, or uninteresting. But it is terribly limited; and its appeal being unfailing, it is—or it ends by being—a cheap device. When, moreover, sex is present to make up for deprivations in the culture of a whole age, it becomes a burden to literature. As Shaw said in praising the purity of Poe, "Literature is not a keyhole for people with starved affections to peep through at the banquets of the body." One is permitted to think that the glut of sex in our prose and verse fictions will remain as the special mark of our work, the brand of the times on our genius; and one may perhaps imagine further that sooner or later a Cervantes will come, who in a comic saga of sex will bury our standardised bedroom adventures like so many tales of chivalry.

Injustice and Praise

When the unjust, uncivil
Or brutal act wrongs
A man, and he can call
No judge to answer the throng's
Bestial hatred, then
Not to retaliate
Against wicked men
Becomes him and his fate.

If in the ritual
Of vengeance he live,
He makes perpetual
His failure to forgive.
No; to those arbiters
Of true behaviour
There is no strength but stirs
To honour its saviour.

A tyrant's victory
Even in the old tales
Left with the dead the glory
Dropped from unequal scales.
When power on every side
Spelt ruin, defeat,
Never was theme for pride
More certain, more sweet.

Plagues, with hostile weather
Driving from chance or hate
When evils come together
In Job could consecrate
A strictness, a trust
Inviolable. To sing
When taunted by the unjust
Is a most sacred thing.

But what if pride of race
That enemy prove,
How shall a man efface
The inhuman scar on love?
How suffer, not pay back
With sworn antipathy
That scar's degrading lack
Where love divine should be?

Though worst injustice came,
He would be right
Not to sully that name
Which gave him light,
Scourged Christ, by whom the devil
Finds himself outwitted
Whose breast encounters evil
But cannot commit it.

Vernon Watkins

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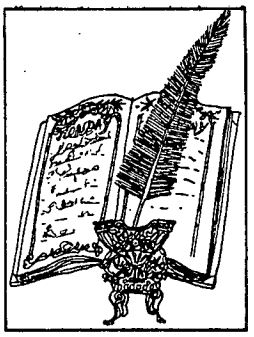

Column

LOOKING out from my window at a London enveloped in soft grey mist, snow melting underfoot, the air raw and chilly, forlorn Lowry-like figures crossing the Park, I find it easy to believe that the English are really a race unto themselves and in their island of rain and fog are not as other men and women are. For surely a people bred under such very special climatic conditions must necessarily be so concerned with the struggle for survival that they can have neither time nor thought for the affairs of the rest of the world.

And so indeed it seems at this particular moment of writing, with industry in the Midlands shut down by a failure in the supply of gas, public transport in London more than usually hazardous because of a ban on overtime, a railway strike in the offing, political interest centred on the Hull by-election and its possible effects on the government's future, and even the Rhodesian crisis reduced to a kind of personal contest between Mr. Wilson and Mr. Smith. At such times, life in England develops an intolerably claustrophobic and obsessive quality and somehow one longs to flee this Bird's Custard Island for lands where skies are less opaque and horizons wider.

For beyond all the insular problems which so obsess us, and for the most part so monotonously repeat those of other years in which, to our astonishment, winter turned out to be cold, there is one which cannot be solved unless we escape from our domestic preoccupations; it is also one which is as urgent as any of them and in the long run will have a far more decisive effect upon our future.

I mean, of course, the problem of Europe, which in the coming year, or even the next few months, is likely to demand of this country decisions which will have the most far-reaching consequences. Such a statement may seem surprising in view of the deadlock which has prevailed in the affairs of the Common Market during the last six months. Many people in this country have regarded this, not without a certain feeling of *Schadenfreude*, as evidence that the Common Market has lost, perhaps for ever, the momentum of its development and has succumbed to its own internal dissensions. Others believe that the negative reply given to Britain's application for membership three years ago was a final one which is not likely to be changed, at least during General de Gaulle's lifetime.

THE TRUTH is otherwise. The deadlock in the Common Market has now lasted so long that the Six cannot permit it to last any longer without risking the loss of everything which has been gained by the creation of the European Economic Community; and this is something they have no intention of allowing to happen. Moreover, even General de Gaulle has by now realised that his attempt to impose his own views, and his own leadership, on France's partners has not in fact brought France, or himself, increased prestige, credit or advantage. He has come out of it not with greater but diminished glory. On the other hand, France's partners in the Market have shown a remarkable cohesion and unity of purpose in the face of General de Gaulle's demands for a revision of the Treaty of Rome and a determination to continue the work of creating a united Europe, even though this may involve concessions to General de Gaulle's point of view. It might be said that the deadlock in the Market is evidence that national tensions and national ambitions survive even within the framework of the E.E.C.; but by now its effect has been to impress upon all its members the necessity and urgency of reconciling their differences, if they are to fulfil the conditions laid down for the final four-year period which remains before the Treaty of Rome comes fully into effect in 1970.

This is not to say that the methods adopted during this period will necessarily be the same as those which have proved successful during the preceding stages of carrying the Treaty into effect. The deadlock has not been all loss. Both General de Gaulle and his partners have learned from it, and one of the lessons has been that during the final stages of fulfilling the Treaty new ideas, new measures, and new men may be required. For the deadlock itself is a symptom that the European community has lost something of the idealism, the enthusiasm, the impetus and momentum, which originally allowed its members to make the community the reality that it is.

*

ONE OF THE MOST encouraging signs in Europe at the moment is precisely the growing awareness that, if the Treaty of Rome is to be fulfilled, new sources of energy and vitality must be called upon; in particular, that the enthusiasm of the younger generation has to be infused into institutions that for the most part have been created by men who today are old enough to be their fathers and grandfathers.

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No one could ever underestimate the contribution made to the creation of a united Europe by men such as M. Spaak, Dr. Adenauer, M. Monnet, Professor Hallstein, or even General de Gaulle; but in the eyes of the young they are fuddy-duddies, and the machinery of the E.E.C. is apt to appear as the work of soulless, if efficient, bureaucrats.

One may find a curious reflection of how far the Europe of the E.E.C. has moved away from the ideals which brought it into existence in Lord Gladwyn's recent book, *The European Idea*. "At the end of 1945," he writes, "there arrived back in France a haggard band of living skeletons in striped uniforms known as *les déportés*. They were the survivors of the appalling German concentration camps. Many of them had had every opportunity of reflecting on the nature of the political set-up that they would wish to see established after the war. So had, in their hide-outs, many of the most remarkable of the *résistants* who had escaped the attention of the Gestapo. These men, and others, had reached the conclusion that the only sure way to prevent a repetition of the horrors which they had endured was to form some European community which was something more than the sum of its component parts; in other words, an entity with a personality of its own which would limit the complete freedom of action of the individual nation-states."

I do not know if Lord Gladwyn is right in attributing to the ideas of the *déportés* and the *résistants* so much influence on the creation of a united Europe; but I feel sure that ideas that came out of the concentration camps or the resistance movement have very little relevance to the E.E.C. as it exists today. In particular, the idea of a united Europe as a means of preventing a repetition of the European wars of the past has in the age of the hydrogen bomb completely lost its force. Equally, for instance, the idea of a united Europe as a barrier against Communist aggression today inspires very little enthusiasm and has very little reality; the spectre of Communism no longer haunts Western Europe and the Soviet Union itself has come to seem not so much an ogre as a way of life with which it is necessary to come to terms. Yet both of these ideas were originally a powerful inspiration to the founding fathers of the movement for European union.

WHEN THE DEADLOCK in the Common Market comes to an end, as it inevitably will, it is likely that Western Europe will resume its advance towards unity by other means than before. They may well include measures which, in an effort to reconcile the ideas of General de Gaulle and his partners, may (like Lenin's NEP) embody a policy of one step forward two steps back. They may include a reversal, or a revision, of the primacy hitherto given to economic over political considerations, and attempts to give a greater reality and weight to the parliamentary and democratic infra-structure of the community. And there are many other possible approaches to the possibility of resuming the advance towards a closer and more permanent union, and one may be sure that they will be followed with a greater flexibility as a result of the difficulties which have emerged during the last year.

But what seems certain is that they will include a renewed attempt to draw Britain into a closer association with the Europe of the Six, and that its success or failure will largely depend on Britain's readiness to respond to it. It would be lamentable if our insular obsessions were, in the coming months, to become so strong that the problem of Europe, and of our relation with it, were in danger of going by default. For if conditions in the E.E.C. are now favourable to a renewed application for membership by Britain, the opportunity will not be open to us for long and, if lost, is not likely to recur. The Six must shortly take hard decisions on many problems, including the problem of Britain, which will determine their policies during the four years that remain before the Treaty of Rome comes into full effect; once taken they will be difficult to modify, especially on so crucial a problem as British membership, without causing a serious interruption in the timetable. If Britain cannot seize quickly, and without the mental reservations which hampered her earlier applications for membership, the opportunity which now exists, it may never arise again.

WHAT WOULD BE disastrous would be that it should be missed, not for lack of goodwill in this country, of which there is increasing evidence, even in the Labour Party, but because of the multiplicity of other problems by which the country is now faced. One must therefore welcome any and every attempt to call attention, before it is too late, to the particular problem of Europe and to create a vigorous and informed body of public opinion which is aware both of its urgency and of the changed conditions and new opportunities which have arisen within the E.E.C. since Britain's last application for membership. I am therefore delighted that, as its own contribution to this end, ENCOUNTER, in conjunction with the University of Sussex, will in April hold a series of discussions and seminars on the problem of Europe, under the direction of a number of distinguished experts from Britain, France, Germany and Switzer-

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land, and further discussions will take place later in Hamburg, Bologna, and Grenoble.

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I MUST CONFESS that my own deep belief in the necessity of Britain's entry into Europe contains a strong element of wish-fulfilment; I should like to destroy as many as possible of the barriers that divide us from the lands where the lemons grow. I thought of this while visiting the magnificent Bonnard exhibition, now still on show at the Royal Academy, but not, alas, for much longer. For two months there has been nowhere in London where those who feel starved of sun, light, and colour could more easily refresh their senses. Straight out of murky Piccadilly one steps into a world which seems entirely composed of fruit, flesh, and flowers, of domestic interiors in which every object, however ordinary, has been transformed into a luxury, of bath tubs in which girls float like lilies in a pond and beds on which they lie in indolent poses which display every attraction of nudity.

Bonnard's world, which is hardly more than a room and a garden, has an infinite charm because it seems to lie so easily within our reach, demanding nothing except a seeing eye and the most accessible commodities of bourgeois life. So much so indeed, that it is very easy, and indeed is in itself quite a sufficient delight, to accept him at his face value simply as a painter of the most immediate pleasures of life, who required nothing more to stimulate him to his greatest achievements as an artist.

Yet if one looks again (and invariably something forces one to look again) one realises that this does him far less than justice, for there is in his pictures an ingenuity, a power of invention, a sleight-of-hand, which are anything rather than simple, and indeed there is nothing in them which is quite what it seems. Light does not fall quite as it should, colour, however brilliant, has in it something opaque and deliberately impure, there is a kind of off-beat emphasis which leaves what is important in obscurity and throws into relief what is not. And all this adds to these ravishing pictures an element of mystery and elusiveness, of something unsaid and withheld, haunting and tantalising, and perhaps this element is the essence of his art which makes us realise that even in Bonnard charm is far from everything and that he is an even greater painter than he seems. Why should a doorway half open on to a garden that is riotous with flowers and foliage suddenly cast on us a spell that haunts as well as delights us, as if some mysterious conjuror were at work?

But if there is a mystery in all Bonnard's painting there is in the exhibition another mystery also; for into some of the pictures there seem to have crept colours and tones in which this particular touch is altogether missing, almost indeed as if some other hand than his own had been at work. Is it simply that for once his hand had faltered and his eye had failed to register? One finds it hard to believe, but what other explanation could there be? Or have one's own eyes deceived one and has one simply made up a small mystery of one's own? I should like to know the answer.

R.

Poem

the willow has turned yellow
yellow
as the starlings
beak
as the fall grass
was
and your hair

Hobart Myers

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ART

At the Louvre with Giacometti

By Pierre Schneider

TO THE LOUVRE? Giacometti accepts out of politeness—the man keeps his promises—rather than pleasure. A horror of museums? On the contrary. *"I have just about the whole Louvre stored in my mind, room by room, painting by painting."* To achieve such command, he has made use of the method employed by Western painters since the Renaissance: *"I have copied a great deal.... practically everything that has been done since the beginning of art."*

A place where you can see practically everything that has been done since the beginning of art: this is, after all, a fair definition of a museum. Giacometti visited the Louvre assiduously during his first years in Paris: *"Every Sunday."* His preferences?

"What was most immediate, newest: Chaldea, Fayum, Byzantium. What I love in the past is exactly what is most alike to what I see, to my way of seeing things. Chaldean sculpture, for instance. And I prefer a thousand times Byzantine to Western painting."

He "gazed" at art, and drew it to sharpen his gaze. *"In trying to copy a thing, you see it better. I questioned each work in turn, intensely, at length."*

Gazing, questioning: Giacometti's way of proceeding is summarised by these two words. He says: *"copy in order to see better."* And if one asks him what art is, he replies: *"A means to see better."* One senses that he is prepared to reduce art, his own art, to this simple activity: representing as faithfully as possible something that is there. So simple, in fact, that it becomes impossible. *"Take the contour which runs from the ear to the chin. How can one get into the canvas, on an extent of three centimetres, a line which seems twenty centimetres long? It is humanly impossible."* The sense of this impossibility led him, towards 1923, to give up this conception of art—*"because it seemed absurd to run after something that was totally doomed from the outset, no?"* He ceased to question reality; and, for a number of years, sought to take inventory of whatever residual certitude it had deposited in his mind, abandoning to anonymity and to quasi-abstraction those fragments which he was unable to reconstruct—as in some incomplete robot-portrait. But where ends memory, where begins imagination? Gradually, Giacometti's work drew closer to Surrealism, into which, towards 1930, it seemed to have merged altogether. For Surrealism offered an alternative: shut those eyes that set impossible tasks for you, replace the real by the imaginary, the visual by the visionary. During that period, Giacometti ceases going to the Louvre: he will return there only the day when he is again to be concerned with reality.

SO EVERYTHING will begin all over again—the same absurdity, the same impossibility. Except for one decisive difference: Giacometti has discovered in the meantime that the unlimited possibility of non-representational art is even more frightening than the impossibility of representing reality. The visual smashes itself against the reefs of the external universe: the visionary, unhindered, projects an inner world on canvas screen or into malleable clay. Like a tyrant, the visionary generates emptiness around itself and brooks no contradiction. Like a tyrant, too, the visionary suffers from this emptiness, sensing that so much solitude will lead to its undoing. No longer having any object, art becomes its own object. This Giacometti finds unbearable: for him, art is not the end of a vision, but a *"means of seeing,"* a school for looking. Indeed, I know of no artist who perceives the components of a painting or a sculpture as sharply; and one would swear that this sharpness is contagious. In the course of our walk through the Louvre, he had only to stop in front of a canvas and to scrutinise it for people to assemble and to do the same.

A school for looking: school is a gradual process. The dangerous thing about art, as Plato noted, is that the charm of the instruction provided threatens to keep us indefinitely tied to the school bench. Giacometti is of quite the same opinion.

ALBERTO GIACOMETTI *died in Switzerland on January 11, at the age of 64.*

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"I used to see the world through the goggles of the existing arts. I would go to the Louvre to see the paintings and sculptures of the past, and I found them more beautiful than reality. To-day, when I go to the Louvre, all these representations of the external world—and, until fifty years ago, all painting, all sculpture were direct representations of the external world, weren't they?—strike me as partial, precarious. I ask myself how the devil they could have seen it like that. And what astonishes me, what really gets me, isn't the paintings and sculptures any more, but the people who look at them. Now I only look at the people who are looking. They don't resemble at all—or almost not—the representations that have been made of them. They are so much more extraordinary that there have been times when I almost found myself forced to run away.... Lately, I was looking at some Chaldean sculptures, when I saw a woman leaning over one of them, looking at it. At once, the Chaldean sculpture became a rather crudely hewn stone roughly in the shape of a head, whereas the head that was looking at it became something dazzling, wondrous, completely unknown. I could look at nothing else but at this person."

Reality alone is able to awaken the eye, to raise it from its solitary dream, its inner vision, and to compel it to the conscious act of seeing. For reality is the visible, and like jewels which lose their sparkle when they are not worn, the visible, it would seem, only comes to life in the beam of our gaze. Illusion, perhaps? This much is certain: the mystery of reality's otherness irresistibly incites us to question it. And here we are: questions, answers. Clumsy questions, obscure answers, but never mind: thanks to reality, a dialogue is instored.

"All activity is really unconscious—except dialogue. The only thing of interest is a dialogue with somebody about something, no?"

Because dialogue preserves us from finalities, from solitude, from endless hoarding, from sleep. It is the readiness to take part in a game of exchange. Man's redeeming virtue, according to Giacometti, is that he is a creature capable of dialogue. If he himself detests sleep, it is because one is always alone in its folds. He likes places where people talk; he is given to contradict others (and himself) in order to keep the conversation alive. He goes to the museum as one goes to the café or to the forum: the works of art are partners in a discussion. A ceaseless motion, almost tangible, is initiated between him and them. He steps closer, steps away, charges in again with such animation that one could suspect that they are really replying to him. It is a dialogue with everything visible.

Such faith in the virtues of dialogue remind me of those modern economic theories which claim that the health of an economy resides in exchange, in the uninterrupted flow of money: if the flow stops, if the money accumulates, lethargy and (soon) the fatal crisis ensue. Hence it is necessary—paradoxical as it may seem—to engage in deficit spending. The loss enriches, activates. It is in this sense that Giacometti, while considering that the act of representing reality is doomed to failure, nevertheless regards it as useful, as necessary. Thanks to it, art avoids becoming an object and remains an instrument of exchange.

I EXPECTED Giacometti to lead me towards the sculptures of Sumer or the paintings of the Fayum. But, no. A quick glance at the great Roman mosaic of "The Amazonomachia," to point out the tragic character of the bleeding man, and he says: *"What I really want most to see is Le Nain's 'Cart.'"* Is Giacometti repudiating his earlier enthusiasms? He has questioned those works so much that they are now an integral part of him, and this hampers the dialogue. One is reminded of the two friends described by Nerval, who knew each other so well that they guessed the slightest cause of their slightest thoughts. Having nothing to say to each other any more, they limited themselves to playing dominoes.

As we walk up the stairs, I think of Giacometti's situation in contemporary art: isolated by that will to represent which links him to the art of the past. But this fidelity, which in other times would have been synonymous with facility, implies quite the opposite today. It is as if the heir of a lengthy royal lineage felt constrained by some inner necessity to assert his rights to the throne at the very hour when nations trample crowns (or, worse still, enshrine them in illustrated magazines). An immense naïveté used to mask the absurdity of the project of representing reality. Dürer, Leonardo da Vinci, Seurat—prodigious, erudite naïveté. Our century has destroyed this candid faith. Abstraction is perhaps merely a form of caution, the natural consequence drawn from our awareness of the impossibility of representing the world.[1]

[1] Abstract painting of the "lyrical" or "action" variety has now, evidently, been deserted by younger generations of artists and pronounced dead by older generations of critics. It is worth noting, however, that, despite appearances, the recent brands of "realism" are still basically abstract. The world is not actively seen by them, but passively accepted, incorporated. One cannot speak of things seen, because the artist is not really *looking*, in the sense given to this word by Giacometti's practice and remarks.

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"I SEE SMALL. *I don't recognise people unless they are on the other side of the street. To be my size, people must be small. Nothing is less monumental than a large statue seen from nearby. Life-size is not the size of life, it is a mental construction. It prevailed from the Renaissance to Matisse, not before, not after—Van Eyck doesn't see and work life-size, nor do I. Primitive art is small. To see small is to see true....*"

"FOR ME, *painting has no future. There will be commercial painting (naked cuties, a corner-of-Brittany, and so on), there will be Sunday painters and* naïfs. *A return to reality? Nonsense.* C'est foutu...."

"PROSTITUTES *are goddesses: the ultimate in womanhood. I took one home, in Rome, when I was adolescent, to draw her. Then I slept with her. I literally exploded with enthusiasm. I shouted: 'It's cold, it's mechanical!' ... War fascinates me. I read every book about war I can find. During the First World War, I was unhappy, ashamed that Switzerland remained neutral...."*

"When I was a child, my father went on a journey. Two days later, I burst out in tears, screaming: 'I don't remember my father's head!' ..."

"A human head is as foreign to me as the head of a wolf."

"WHY I PAINT *frames around the figures in my canvases? Because I determine the figure's real space only after it is done. And with the vague intention of trimming the canvas. I try to fictionalise my painting—the opposite of Kandinsky, who wanted his picture to be an object. And because my figures need a kind of no man's land. The smaller the figures, the vaster must be the space around them. Look at Chinese painting...."*

"I DON'T *intentionally use a limited scale of colours. I can't simultaneously concern myself with the construction and with the colour. I dream of pretty, suave, light colours —like Fra Angelico. But I can't get them on the canvas. People think I deliberately paint black. But I never want to. I remember one spring morning, at Stampa: everything was so pretty, so green. I began painting a landscape, with those pretty trees. But if you so much as stumble on the construction of a branch—good-bye the lovely flowers! I went on painting in the afternoon, and the day after, and the one after that. I worked on the landscape for three months, in every kind of weather. The flowers went, the leaves came and went. By the time I finished, I had four perfectly black landscapes. I couldn't help it. But I see very pretty."*

Giacometti fully shares this awareness. His undertaking is all the madder for it. Although disenchanted, he persists in accomplishing an act for which only naïve belief could give one enough courage.

"Are you really that isolated? Underneath the surface agitation of the subjects represented, doesn't the concern of painting remain constant through the ages? In the Poussin exhibition, held in these very rooms, were drawings that Mondrian would not have disclaimed. And they say that Kandinsky discovered the realm of abstraction by turning a landscape upside down...."

"That strikes me as excessive. One says that one remains 'in the tradition,' that one simply 'creates the structure of the painting without its subject'—as if there could be structure without subject. As if the subject were something banal and accessory superimposed on the painting! Take away the subject and you take away the painting."

"I see we are coming to the *'grandes machines'* of David, Gros and company. One step further, and we shall be with realism. You must be happy.

"Realism is balderdash.... Those who came closest to the vision one has of things are those which art history calls the 'great styles.'[2] *Yes, the works of the past which are generally judged most distant from it—I mean the 'stylish' arts: Chaldea, Egypt, Byzantium, Fayum, some Chinese things, some early Christian miniatures. But not at all what one calls realism! Egyptian painting, though people regard it as the most stylised, strikes me as realistic. Any one of us looks more like an Egyptian sculpture than like any other sculpture ever done. The same is true for the exotic arts, for the sculpture of Africa or Oceania. People like them because they consider them wholly invented and because they negate the external world, the banal view of reality. But they despise an academic Graeco-Roman head because it is 'life-like'—which, to them, is a contemptible quality. I, on the other hand, like a sculpture from New Guinea because I find it looks more like anybody—you, me—than a Graeco-Roman or a conventional head. The most faithful 'vision' is that provided by 'style.' Of course, nobody ever* plans *a style. For the Egyptians, this would have been meaningless. They translated their vision of reality as closely as possible. For them it was a religious neces-*

[2] Giacometti here borrows the two basic terms in André Malraux's theory of art: "vision," *i.e.*, ordinary perception, and "style," which implies the negation of ordinary perception in favour of arbitrary invention, subjective imagination, non-imitative creation.

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sity. It was a matter of creating doubles as near as possible to human beings. There exists an ancient text, a kind of poem, which talks about sculptures so true that they seem living and that they are able to frighten those who see them. The 'style' in them is revealed to us by another vision. Egypt has become a 'style' in our eyes because we see differently. But for them, who had only their own art to look at, who knew only some Asian arts—only scantily at that, and certainly were not interested in them—there could only be one clear vision of the world: their own. The same was true for pre-historic, Romanesque, and Polynesian artists. They had no choice. Only one valid vision of things was available: their own. But to-day we know all the possible visions and we call these visions 'styles' once they are arrested in time and space."

"If I follow you, 'style' is the consequence of sharpness and fidelity of vision?"

"Exactly. I know that if I succeeded in making a head somewhat as I see it, it would obligatorily look 'stylish' in the eyes of other people. Of course, I have never yet succeeded. Still, there is something in my sculpture that comes rather close. . . . The people who look at my sculpture believe it is invented, no? But what makes them look at it is the fact that it does actually come close, fairly close, that it goes a little way towards coming close to the way I see things."

"When you speak of realism, you. . . ."

"A realistic picture is a picture too unreal to become 'stylish.' The trouble with it is that it doesn't look like anything."

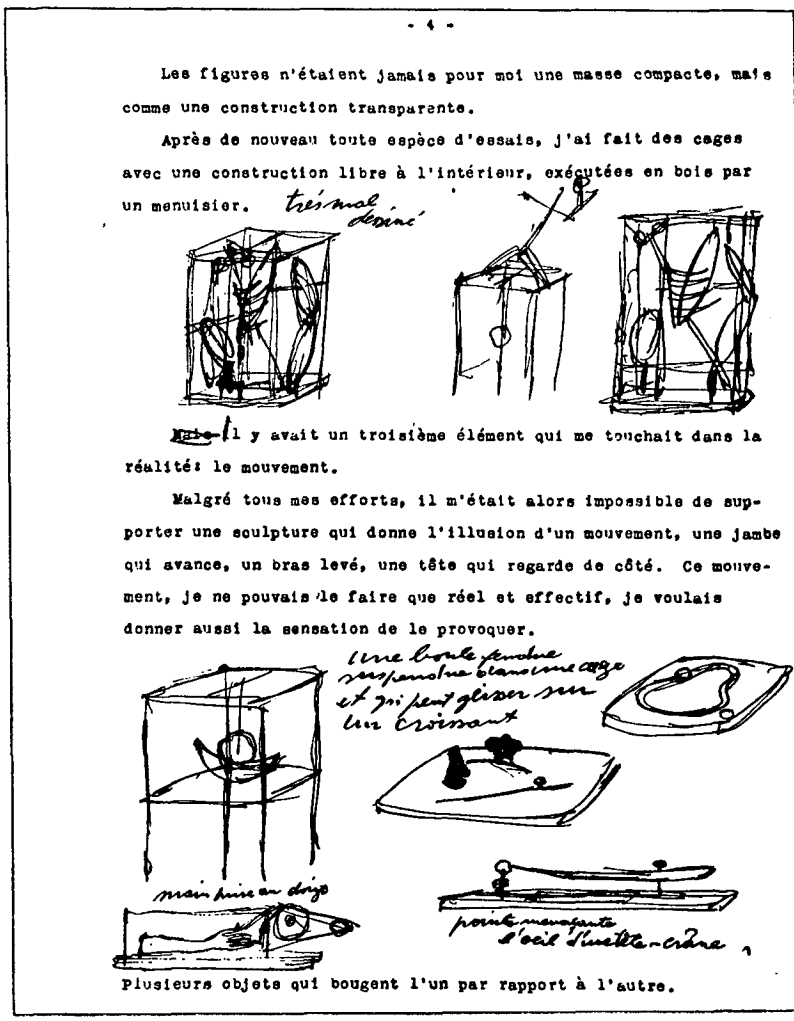
PERHAPS this is why the gaze cast by Giacometti on the museum is so much more searching, more penetrating. We tend to think that all is done once we have recognised the style of a work. For Giacometti, on the other hand, style is only the symptom of the work's existence. To perceive its specific nature—and to detect what it is that makes it appear as the manifestation of an artistic style—one must go further, one must rediscover in the work that element which is vision and representation of truth. Giacometti is about to demonstrate the process for my benefit. We are at the top of the main staircase. On our right, Cimabue's "Virgin Surrounded by Angels."

"This is the painting I used to prefer, to find the truest. The brutes! They have put it on the staircase. They have expelled it from the Louvre."

We step closer.

"It is impossible to be truer to life. Here . . . it is those Roman excavations that changed Giotto. . . . Here: what could be truer, denser than the hands? They are more real than Rembrandt's hands."

Something peculiar now occurs; I follow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Les figures n'étaient jamais pour moi une masse compacte, mais comme une construction transparente.
Après de nouveau toute espèce d'essais, j'ai fait des cages avec une construction libre à l'intérieur, exécutées en bois par un menuisier.
très mal dessiné
Il y avait un troisième élément qui me touchait dans la réalité: le mouvement.
Malgré tous mes efforts, il m'était alors impossible de supporter une sculpture qui donne l'illusion d'un mouvement, une jambe qui avance, un bras levé, une tête qui regarde de côté. Ce mouvement, je ne pouvais le faire que réel et effectif, je voulais donner aussi la sensation de le provoquer.
une boule pendue suspendue blanche une cage et je peut glisser sur un croisant
main pliée en deux
pointe menaçante d'oeil silhouette-crâne
Plusieurs objets qui bougent l'un par rapport à l'autre.

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Giacometti's intense gaze and the Virgin's hands seem to begin to grow larger. Soon I see only them. They generate (and I am suddenly reminded of his sculptures which represent a foot, a leg, but so huge that one no longer thinks of the body to which they lead up) the void around them.

"What depth!"

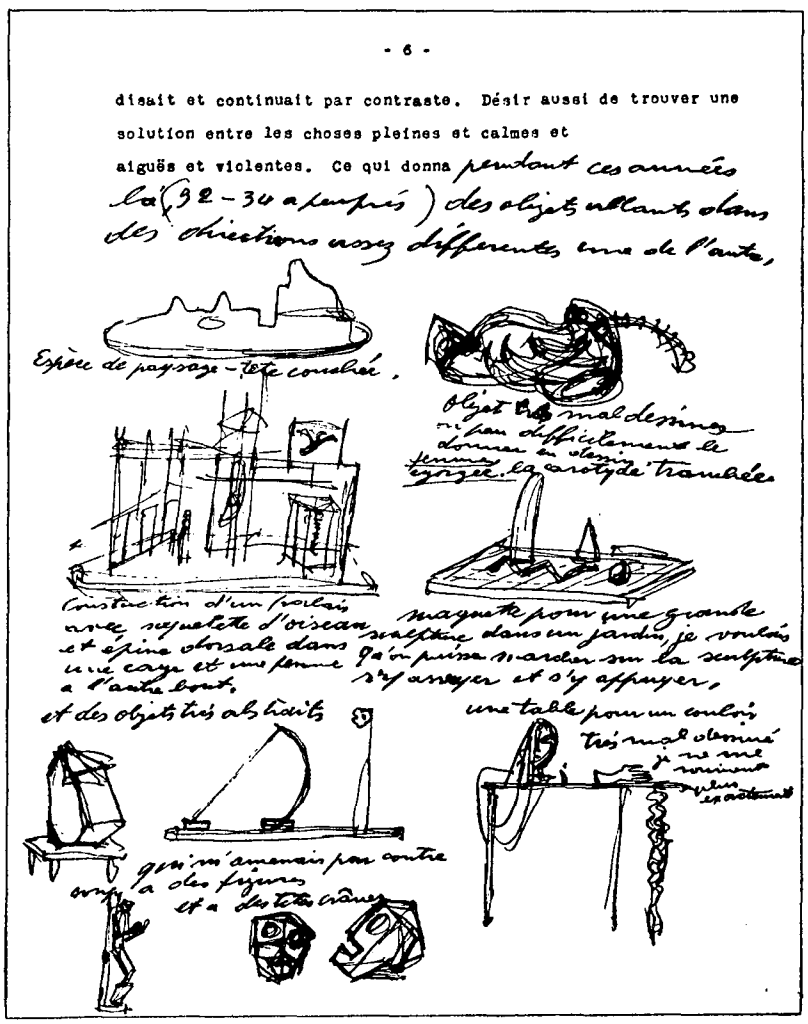
We were looking for a thing's aspect: what we unexpectedly came upon is space's depth. It is the very dialectic of which Giacometti, in his own work, is rather the victim (albeit consenting) than the master. Part becomes bigger than whole; whole becomes smaller than the smallest part. The will to represent specific individuals gives birth to nearly anonymous figures; the need for dialogue reveals interminable, silent distances. These distances, however, are greeted enthusiastically by Giacometti. Without them, painting would be a mere decorative pastime. *"To-day's abstract painters see everything in large format, in strong colours, in blotches without depth."*

The large format scatters our sight, the strong colours blind it, and the blotches drown the precision of identity, as the folds of a sumptuous garment blur the body's contours. Without precise sharply-drawn identity, no depth. It is the detail that differentiates a form, sets it off, separates it from others, generates around itself the void we call space. The infinities of space cannot be grasped in themselves (besides, as Pascal remarked, they are frightening). They must be baited by some tightly defined form. Reciprocally, the artist only gains access to space involuntarily. As a fisherman hunting for crabs is so preoccupied by his search that he pays no attention to the sea rising all around him until, raising his eyes, he sees himself isolated on a rock, the artist in quest of a precise truth finds himself, without realising it until it has happened, assailed on all sides by depth. A depth so marvellous yet so dangerous that he must cling still more firmly to the appearance of things, thereby generating still more depth.... Thus the dialogue finds a kind of stability in perpetual motion.

"I see a tree like Mantegna or Van Eyck rather than like the Impressionists," he says in front of the "Saint Sebastian." *They work in depth. The Impressionists see things as blotches. I used to be crazy about this picture—because of its colours: they are sparing, very sparing, and yet the result is the opposite of a grisaille."*

With a touch of melancholy, he adds:

"This is a truthful work. But it cannot be our own way towards truth. Mantegna has seen this head [the archer's] *the way I see heads. But I could never make it like that. The 'Saint Sebastian' is like behind a curtain. One will never be able to lift it again.... What is stag-*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disait et continuait par contraste. Désir aussi de trouver une
solution entre les choses pleines et calmes et
aiguës et violentes. Ce qui donna pendant ces années
là (32 - 34 à peu près) des objets allant dans
des directions assez différentes, une de l'autre,
Espèce de paysage - tête coupée.
objet très mal dessiné
ni bien difficilement la
femme en plomb
Construction d'un palais
avec squelette d'oiseau
et épine dorsale dans
une cage et une femme
à l'autre bout.
maquette pour une grande
statue dans un jardin, je voulais
qu'on puisse marcher sur la sculpture
s'y asseoir et s'y appuyer,
et des objets très abstraits
une table pour un couloir
très mal dessiné
qui ne me
gênait pas contre
un
à des figures
et à des têtes

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gering is that every discovery is at once irretrievably lost again."

Perhaps "style" is merely "vision" after the curtain has fallen? At any rate, they are not contradictory. Before Leonardo's "Bacchus":

"At first, it looks real, and then it looks like a sign: at once dancing Buddha and swastika."

But that lesson is almost too dialectical. The heart of Giacometti's manner of proceeding is revealed by his next remark:

"And then, in contradiction with the figure, those flowers at the bottom.... (They are so delicate, so fragile, that you have to lean forward to notice them.) *"This is truer, stranger than Dürer—a corner of China in Milano.... Those stalks: tall as trees...."*

The East possessed superlatively the art (so close to Giacometti's dialectic) of making the immense surge from the delicate and of producing infinity by means of strict finiteness. The Balinese dancer moves knees bent, almost crouching: when he raises himself, it is as if he made a fantastic leap. The effect of upward fusing is greater than that provoked by the Russian ballet dancer, who never stops jumping. Before Goya's "Marquesa de la Solana": *"What a marvel! It is made with minimum means. It is as sparingly coloured as Mantegna, and yet it is dazzling! Next to it, David and Ingres seem horrible."*

IT COULD BE that Giacometti keeps up his steady commerce with culture because the sharpening of our gaze through multiple confrontations teaches us to detect ever more minute differences to narrow down the scale of aesthetic stimuli without weakening the intensity of their effect. A scrawny tree on a square in an industrial suburb impresses as sharply as the lushest jungle flora. By overpopulating our awareness, culture renders us attentive to the slightest variations. Cultural distance is curiously alike to the distance for which Giacometti looks in art. He waxes ecstatic before Corot's "Woman with the Pearl." *"A funny kind of eye . . . faraway . . . faraway...."*

Like the figures which he paints and sculpts, Giacometti goes to the Louvre looking for interlocutors, but finds solitude. But the very factor which makes contact impossible stakes out the area of art: the space between, depth. A painting of the past is as far, no more no less, as the tree or the model we try to represent. Before Tintoretto's Self-Portrait: *"You can't approach it. It always remains at a distance, like reality. It is one of the pictures I loved most when I first came to Paris. It is the only one to come close to the Fayum, to Byzantium. It goes farther than Rembrandt (whereas Cézanne goes elsewhere). It's the whole skull: the eye but also the socket, the very structure of the head. And it is done with nothing. Really, the finest head in the Louvre."*

At last, our goal: Louis Le Nain's "Cart."

"After what we have just seen, it seems a bit dry, limited, a bit 'petit sujet'."

But Giacometti's gaze insists and, already, judgment yields to dialogue; the perspective changes, becomes inverted.

"It starts improving right away, hein? *One thinks of Chardin, of Vermeer....It is dry like a whiplash....What a marvellous figure!* [the one in the left background]*....The one at the right, in the foreground, seems more false.... No, not more false: it is seen differently.* [Under the gaze in search of the truth, the identity of things, they separate.] *The pigs, the group at the left, the landscape and the group at the right are painted in three different manners. It could be by three different painters. The woman with the pail is so beautiful that she makes a complete picture all by herself; you cannot even look at the figure next to her.* [The silence that follows is like a correlative, in the mind of the gazer, of the depth that opens up between the parts of the picture isolated by their trueness to their own identity; and then, by a further reversal, it is this depth which now will bind the disparate entities, as islands are bound by sea.] *Yet it all makes one composition."*

While Giacometti speaks, I see his own work defining itself in the filigree of Le Nain's picture, as if the disinterested ingenuousness of his gaze made the curtain transparent. What he tells me about his art he could never have told me without the mediation of another—without Le Nain's "Peasant Family" before which we now stop. Instantly, the excruciating truthfulness of the details catch his attention and, in its beam, begin to grow: *"The bit of red in the wine glass gives the whole picture its colour. Without it, the picture wouldn't exist. The candlestick on the table—grand as a monument on a Roman square."*

What I see is no longer a corner of a tablecloth but the Piazza Navona. But already he is saying: *"What sympathetic heads!...All those gazes do not gaze at us. That eye, what nostalgia!"*

"If people heard you now, wouldn't they think you've become a victim of anecdote?..."

"Ah, bien! Je m'en fous!...And the girl's eye: it has a Fourth Dynasty air....And the old woman's head resembles the madwomen's heads by Géricault, heads by Rembrandt, by Corot, by Chardin...."

Relation with reality and relation with art, dissimilar though they are, share the same pictorial presence.

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"Here is a dark eye and here the Piazza Navona and here the Fourth Dynasty. Everything is equally true. The pitcher of wine placed on the table and the glass which the man holds vertically above it are things seen. And yet they repeat the pattern of the superimposed figures in 'The Cart.'"

At the sharp point of the living gaze, artistic style and vision of reality are consubstantial; and this oneness does not make the present vision retrench itself behind the world of art, but leads the works of the past back to the present of vision, embodied at this precise moment by one picture or another.

"It looks like everything . . . and like nothing. . . ."

Depth gradually invades the picture, absorbing the sharp forms which generated it.

"A soft depth . . . one enters into it as into music. How soft it is, how pleasant."

In the nocturnal musical depth of space, the faces that seemed so interesting a few minutes ago are nothing more now than nameless spheres, gently glowing. The images of reality are lamps that momentarily light space's dark chamber, in which all is soon isolated, devoured. Before the "Peasants Eating": *"That fellow at the right—tired, lost, as if lost in the desert. Better to be lost."*

We cast a glance at the canvas hanging next to the "Peasants Eating." It is by Louis' brother, Antoine Le Nain:

"Good, solid painting. Fine surfaces. But not those planets suspended in space, that music. . . ."

And as the inexorable row of guards, formed at the approach of closing time, paces up the *Grande Galerie*, chasing us towards the exit, we throw a final glance at "The Cart."

"When all is said and done, it is one of the paintings I like most, because of its colour. Like pearl. It is—perhaps on account of the break made by the woodpile at the left?—like a little island adrift. At a distance, its colour for me is of a. . . . It is the colour of the countryside. Ah, la, la!"

Funeral

". . . He died at the hospital of Coire. It was, we were told, about 10 p.m., or about the time he usually left his studio on Rue Hippolyte-Maindron to have dinner (lunch, actually, since his day began in the afternoon—at the Dôme or the Coupole). The funeral took place at Stampa where he was born. . . .

"Whenever you did not see him for a while at his familiar haunts in Montparnasse or Alésia, chances were that he had gone back to Stampa. It had always seemed strange, this craving of the night-bird for the Swiss mountain, the pure light. But now that we saw Stampa (for the first time, in my own case), the strangeness vanished. The studio in Stampa, where the coffin was exhibited, was no bigger than the Paris one. Here as there, you could see the same lucid, stubborn adherence to pristine patterns on the very edge of progress and change. There, the tiny atelier *in the* quatorzième *where nothing, from stone to aesthetic purpose, had changed for twenty years or more. Here, the small mountain valley practically unnoticed and unaltered by the Fiats and Alfa-Romeos from Milano rushing to the snow of Saint Moritz. . . . It made many things clearer. The narrow valley is framed by two sheer mountain walls—three months of the year, the sun does not reach Stampa. Here, the emphasis on verticals, so marked in his work, is geographic reality. In New York, which he visited shortly before, he had liked above all the district around Wall Street: narrow, cliff-trapped, sunless. His Paris studio was minuscule, but very high.*

"Immobility on the edge of agitation; silence between the lines of noise; fragile, close-by figures devoured by endless space—he was fascinated by contradictions and concerned with relating them. 'C'est bel et bien impossible, hein? C'est complètement idiot, non?'. . . .

"Impossible, absurd—that is what we thought, standing around the coffin, in the small room. On the floor: the same painted marks as in Paris, so the model could take up the identical posture day after day; the same burns on the floor, made by stamped-out cigarettes. Around us: sculptures, drawings, recent canvases. Finished or unfinished? Impossible to tell and it does not matter. From the first moment to that of interruption, they are occupied by the same, invariable figure, provoking, defying interrogation. Answers resemble death: Giacometti only questioned. . . .

"At two, the coffin left the house. Outside, the children of Stampa sang Protestant hymns in Italian. The hearse, drawn by an old horse, was one of those open rectangular boxes you still find in remote, poor villages. It might have been constructed by Giacometti for one of his sculptures.

"We walked to the village church, a half-mile away. Speeches by officials, speeches by museum directors. A very moving moment when the mayor of Stampa spoke: his Italian had the same rocky intonations as Giacometti's. Then the minister began a sermon (to our surprise with a Neapolitan accent). He spoke confusedly of the day of the resurrection. While he went on, the temperature dropped to minus twenty degrees C. . . .

"In the churchyard, on his mother's tomb is erected a beautiful stele (by his brother Diego), for which Alberto himself designed the letters of the inscription. Giacometti was buried in the same churchyard, next to his mother. . . " P. S.

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NOTES & TOPICS

The Tory Debate

Towards New Political Values?

WITH ALL DUE respect to Angus Maude, I am not sure that in his article (ENCOUNTER, February) he really gets to the heart of the current debate on future Conservative policy. Centralisation *versus* the individual (his theme) is certainly one of the general dilemmas with which Party thinking must always be profoundly concerned. Indeed, stated a little more broadly, as "organisation *versus* individual liberty," it is *the* political dilemma.

But this is just to restate the familiar problem. The whole point of Conservative rethinking during the past year, as I understand it, has been to carry this general concern into the field of policy and come up with some practical proposals. And it does seem to me that the recent Tory Policy Statement—*Putting Britain Right Ahead*—read together with various other expressions of Tory thinking in speeches, articles, pamphlets, etc., goes a fair way towards fulfilling this objective.

Besides, I rather doubt whether the form in which Angus Maude poses the dilemma has much substance. Is the country really full of people with a "dimly felt need for a new purpose," all trying to "identify themselves in any meaningful way with the processes of government or the main institutions of society"? I know that Mr. Harold Wilson was fond of this kind of proposition before the last election. And Mr. Jo Grimond has written a whole book (*The Liberal Challenge*, 1963) about the need to participate.

But this always seemed to me to be rather a high-falutin' way of expressing a much more workaday feeling—namely, that the economy, the public services, the unions, and the welfare and social security systems all appear to be increasingly badly managed, and that the sooner we have people in charge who will really get on and put things right the better.

"Putting things right" may well involve extensive schemes for taking the load off the central bureaucracy as well as for reviving individual incentives in other ways. In welfare I have no doubt that this is particularly so. For all I know it may even involve taking some services right out of the state sector if their vitality is to be restored. Radical reform of the structure of local government will almost certainly be part of the process. But I suspect too that in most people's minds these are seen as matters for the men who have been put in charge to work out. That is what they are there for and that is what they are paid for. Banging on their office doors and shouting "You must decentralise: we wish to participate" is neither helpful towards good management decisions nor can I believe this is something responsible citizens really want to do.

Furthermore, the kind of questions raised by this perfectly simple and understandable demand that things should be better managed are plainly questions of method. They are questions about "*How* we do things" rather than questions of ends, Angus Maude's doubts on this point notwithstanding. Does he really believe that Conservative policy should offer yet another sermon on Ends and Goals and Purposes? Surely not. Surely, what politicians ought to be trying to do in this country at this stage is create and maintain the conditions in which people can sit down and do some of *their own* thinking, with such outside advice as they may care to draw on, about purposes and the best way of using new opportunities. My guess is that the last thing the people of England want at this moment is yet another barrage of leaden lectures from the politicians about what they should do with their lives and what their social ends should be. I do not know how things are at Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Maude's constituency), but the overwhelming demand I find is for politicians to lay off the social ends and the "national purpose."

I doubt whether people even want to hear much more about all the nice purposeful things we could do if only we were richer—"More schools, more hospitals, more roads, higher pensions, bigger benefits, more of everything for everybody if you can just hang on till 1970 and keep voting for me. . . ."

NO, THEY HAVE HAD enough of that and who can blame them? It is action people want—

DAVID HOWELL *is the young (30) Conservative candidate for Guildford. He was one of the moving spirits of the radical Bow Group, and has been the director of the Conservative Political Centre for the last year (but the views he expresses here are, as he writes us, "entirely personal").*

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answers now to today's questions: how do we find homes? how do we run a bus service that really works? how do we train the unskilled? how do we provide a good Health Service? how do we stop prices and taxes going on and on up? how do we preserve the countryside from further violation? how do we stop trucks roaring through our village and shaking it into a pile of rubble? how do we make the telephones work? how do we stop any more ghastly new buildings going up?

In short, the robust message for the politicians is "You provide the opportunities. We will use them. You show how to halt the growing chaos in the organisation of our national life. We will worry about purposes and ends." There is no shortage of ideas about how to live a better life: the trouble is that the chance to do so seems to be steadily receding. If the Conservative Party is really interested in the cause of the individual today then this is the point when it has to step in with some practical proposals on *how* to change the present situation.

What *Putting Britain Right Ahead* does is set out both the strategy and some of the tactics of the Conservative response to this challenge. And if Angus Maude is looking for a "new rationale" in Conservative policies then he could do worse than begin with the three main propositions or thoughts which seem to run through current Conservative thinking, and from which most of the detailed proposals in the Policy Statement flow. All three of them seem to me not only to take up Angus Maude's concern for the place of the individual in modern society but to carry on boldly into the sphere of practical politics. They merit rather more serious debate than they seem to have been granted so far.

SUMMARISING them as I see them the three propositions seem to go as follows:

1. A reorganised economy

We need to apply the philosophy and techniques of modern management—with all that these imply in the way of planning, decentralised control, better communication, incentives and improved welfare—to wide tracts of our national life, but particularly to the state sector and to industrial relations.

2. A responsible society

The same spirit of efficient organisation and devolved responsibility must be carried into the administration of social policy if services of high quality are to be provided, if poverty is to be eliminated, if family life is to be enriched and environment to be transformed.

3. A respected Britain

If Britain is to retain a proper say in its own destiny, let alone command respect in the rest of the world, she must be part of the European community and adjust her attitudes to the world accordingly.

Let me look at each of these three in turn.

The smart word in the field of management is cybernetics and perhaps the temptation to throw it about ought to be resisted. All the same, the science of cybernetics, dealing with management control and the relation of a man to his work, is directly relevant to the point about the democratisation of decision-making with which Angus Maude is so much concerned. For what it tells us is that *efficiency and devolution of responsibility go hand-in-hand.* They are not opposites. On the contrary, only if people participate will they give of their best. "Management is about people" is a slogan one keeps hearing, and it is true. Whether the management is a central Government, a local planning authority, a giant corporation or a small business, the message should be the same: spread the decision load; keep in contact with the widest possible spread of views within the organisation; and then, when decisions are made, keep people clearly and continuously in the picture about the part they are supposed to be playing.

There is nothing very novel about all this, and it is perhaps only Monty-like commonsense. Yet it is remarkable how ready people are to overlook it, to see an Orwellian clash looming up between Efficiency and Democracy. For instance, critics of current Conservative thinking have been busily pointing to the dangers of harping too much on managerial efficiency; it all strikes a cold and inhuman note, they say. Perhaps the words do leave this impression, but in fact nothing could be further from the truth. The demand that modern management techniques be applied is in fact as firm a call for decentralisation as one could make.

It is a realisation that unless the organisers of modern government and modern enterprise, public and private, base their thinking on the position and outlook and needs of individual people and their families and communities then their organisations simply will not function efficiently or competitively; their plans would not work out. The place of the individual within the work plan, and the opportunity which the computer now gives the employer to take full account of this, are becoming of dominating significance: in private firms and organisations the cry is for decentralised control. It ought to

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be the same in every great nationalised industry and public department, from pensions and housing through to local government, traffic and transport control, and city management generally.[1]

THE IMPLICATIONS of this fresh approach for tax reform are also bound to be far-reaching. Efficiency demands that the emphasis be switched heavily on to personal incentives—a point to which even Soviet managers, among others, seem to be groping. And then there are the equally important implications of less centralisation for the trade unions and for the whole machinery of wage and salary determination in Britain.[2]

Again, it could be argued that the same kind of urge to spread responsibility lies behind the Tory drive for a much wider ownership of capital and for the wider adoption of contractual saving and stock option schemes.

And if we follow this same trail it takes us via occupational pensions to the changes which Conservatives are now proposing in the organisation of pensions provision. The decision to break the Central Government monopoly on pension provision looks like a bold move and is directly consistent with the general strategy of wider responsibility and control, as Angus Maude indirectly acknowledges in his article. The proposal to relate housing subsidies firmly to those in need is in the same spirit. In short, the signs are there in Conservative thinking of a radical shift towards a more decentralised and therefore a far higher-quality and more humane system of welfare and security.[3]

FINALLY, there is the Tories' European Community Policy. And what could be more consistent with the general Conservative theme or with Angus Maude's plea for contact with the centres of power than the Conservative insistence that Britain must be part of the Community organism? There is, besides, the "bonus" argument that membership of the Community should be a strong stimulus to the adoption of precisely the methods and management techniques which are mentioned above.

If there is one further major point in the new Conservative thinking which I feel needs bringing out more forcefully it is that the new modernising methods should be applied to the Administration itself and to Parliament. Admittedly, this is implicit in the general call for improved management of the nation's affairs. And Tory leaders have already made it quite clear in speeches that they give high priority to the modernisation of Parliament and of the machinery of government, local and central. But the theme could perhaps be developed still more strongly.

HOW ANGUS MAUDE draws from all this the conclusion that the Policy Statement "does show some distressing signs of having too easily accepted the inevitability of the trend towards centralisation" baffles me. I would have thought that amounted to a firm and most encouraging rejection both of the inevitability and the desirability of top-heavy central control. Surely this is precisely what gives it its sharp contrast, in both strategy and detail, with the main trend of contemporary Socialist thought. Where Labour feels instinctively prejudiced against the profit motive and incentives, Conservatives want to use both to decentralise decisions *and* increase efficiency. Where Labour shows reluctance to adopt rational attitudes towards the public industries, Conservatives want high efficiency management and less State involvement. Where Labour remains tied to trade union hierarchic traditionalism, Conservatives want a more modern and devolved structure allowing for more variations in pay. Where Labour hugs the principle of universality of standard benefit, thus freezing all constructive thinking on welfare state reform, Conservatives want greater individual participation and higher quality. Where Labour remains cool on Europe, Conservatives want British membership of the European Community.

The proposals in the Policy Statement have the additional merit of being related to genuine

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[1] See in particular the Milner Holland Report on the need for several "centres of initiative" in housing; the Smeed Report on road traffic pricing; or the Geddes Report on transport haulage—for some good examples of how to decentralise decisions and responsibilities in these fields.

[2] Amidst all the ballyhoo surrounding George Brown's Statement of Intent and all the egalitarian nonsense about "planned growth of incomes," it is fascinating to see the overriding needs of efficiency—decentralisation of negotiations and more incentive differentials—breaking through. This is almost certainly the direction in which a sensible "incomes policy" for the future lies. See, for example, Aubrey Jones' Sidney Ball Oxford Lecture (1 December 1965) on the need for "a greater degree of differentiation" in wage rates.

[3] The conclusion by the Child Poverty Action Group, reported in *The Times* (24 December 1965) that "there is little evidence to suggest that poverty is diminishing," would seem to be about as severe a condemnation as could be made of the present system and the philosophy which inspires it.

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popular discontents.[4] Mercifully, the document did not find it necessary to start from the inherently absurd proposition that Joe Bloggs wants to participate more in decision-making. Without getting bogged down in any of this mumbo jumbo the Conservative Party has in fact come up with a strategy which is both in line with the aim of reasserting the place of people in a world of plans and big organisations, and which meets recognisable national needs.

AS OF THIS MOMENT there can be little doubt that the country is in poor health, physically and spiritually. It can fairly be argued that what the Opposition are offering are pioneering remedies to inject new life and quality into our tight-knit, over-centralised, and increasingly inefficiently organised society. At the same time what they are proposing is surely profoundly Tory in that it rests on two pillars—a belief in the dignity and the vitality of the individual and a reliance on the development of our institutions to cope with the English crisis of competence. Besides that, the restoration of vigour in England could well be the key to the restoration of impetus in Europe. That in turn, if Jean Monnet is right, could open the gates both to Atlantic unity, in a real sense, and to the further crumbling of East-West divisions. Such a "Grand Design" is perhaps a shade high-flown. But at least it serves to remind that the development of British Conservatism is far more than a Party political matter and far more even than a national affair however mundane the work materials may sometimes seem.

David Howell

Angus Maude's Reply

I HAVE READ David Howell's rejoinder to my February article with great interest. It is pleasant to be discussing the question in a civilised way in public with someone who has actually read what I wrote. What more suitable exercise could there be for the Director of the Conservative Political Centre and one of his predecessors? Of course, it makes most of the row which culminated in my resignation from the Opposition Front Bench look pretty damn stupid, but that's by the way.

David Howell accepts unreservedly the assumption on which my article was based. "As of this moment," he says, "there can be little doubt that the country is in poor health, physically and spiritually." He does not attempt to suggest that this malady began only with the election of a Labour Government in 1964. We both know that it is more deep-seated than that, although it has certainly become worse in the last year.

When he turns to diagnosis, he seems to me to fall somewhat short of complete consistency. He diagnoses the physical trouble accurately and perceptively: all the things that matter "appear to be increasingly badly managed," and he gives examples of the way in which service to the public has been deteriorating. Then, with a leap which is athletic rather than logical, he concedes at least half my case by asserting that "putting things right" will probably involve a substantial measure of decentralisation! When it comes to "extensive schemes for taking the load off the central bureaucracy," I am with him all the way. When he says that "efficiency and devolution of responsibility go hand-in-hand," whether in industrial management or in the administration of the social services, he is simply echoing the last page of my ENCOUNTER article.

However, it is surely a little disingenuous to suggest that this is the message that runs through the pages of *Putting Britain Right Ahead*. It quite clearly isn't. If David Howell is now saying that this is what the policy document *meant* to convey, it would seem that somebody's drafting was at fault. The plain fact is that there is not a single reference to decentralisation or the devolution of responsibility anywhere in the document. Indeed, where it comes nearest to the point the emphasis is rather the other way. We are to have larger super-ministries, and "larger authorities" to tackle community tasks "over a larger area." If this was meant to sound like a plea for decentralisation, it was rather oddly phrased. It would have been so easy to say plainly that regional authorities were intended rather to decentralise some of the functions of national government than to centralise those of local authorities; but the impression given is the reverse.

There are, of course, frequent references in *Putting Britain Right Ahead* to the need to consider the individual. This is unexceptionable, but it is neither unfamiliar nor in itself an inspiring message. It needs to be accompanied by actual proposals for narrowing the gap between the individual and the increasingly remote

[4] See Robert McKenzie's interesting point in the January ENCOUNTER on the NOP question to the electorate about the activities in British life most in need of modernisation: notably the socialised sector and the unions.

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authorities which, according to David Howell, mismanage his affairs.

THIS BRINGS ME to one important point which I do not think he has grasped. He suggests that all people want is to be satisfied that "the men who have been put in charge" know how to cope with things, and then to leave them to get on with it. I do not know how things are in David Howell's constituency, but I am surprised that he has found people so helpless. This is not at all a "robust message for the politicians"! The truth is that most people are delighted to spit on their hands and fight their own battles—if and when they can find the right person to have the row with. As it is, after being batted around from branch to district, from district to area, from area to region, from clerk to manager and back, they come apologetically to their Member of Parliament and say "Can you *please* find *someone* who will take the responsibility of giving me a sensible answer—or indeed any answer at all?" They do indeed want to bang on office doors and shout, and it would be an excellent thing if more of the complaints got shouted in the right ears.

And now I must digress for a moment to deal with one digression. This dragging in of Britain's entry into Europe seems to me largely irrelevant and, where it is relevant, dangerous. I am as much in favour of joining EEC as Howell is, and I am delighted that the intention is clearly stated in the Conservative policy document. But it really won't wash to suggest that this has anything to do with decentralisation or devolution of authority! On the contrary, one of the reasons why so many people are hesitant about entering Europe is that they fear it may have precisely the opposite effect. They feel that ultimate power and decision-making will be taken even farther away from them and that their ability to influence them will be still further reduced. Dedicated and eloquent Europeans should, I believe, clearly recognise this fear and go out of their way to allay it. It is up to them to explain with precision what are the safeguards and how devolution of authority will be accomplished.

That there is a certain ivory-tower remoteness about David Howell's intellectual approach to popular beliefs and fears is pretty clearly shown in one revealing sentence. "Mercifully," he says, "the document did not find it necessary to start from the inherently absurd proposition that Joe Bloggs wants to participate more in decision-making." Perhaps he only knows Joe Bloggs in London and in Guildford; he can know very little about Joe Bloggs in the country. Joe Bloggs on the parish council is dead set on securing the right to participate in the making of planning decisions about the development of his own village. Joe Bloggs is pretty fed up with having his village schools and cottage hospitals closed down without anyone even asking "Do you mind?" The voice of Joe Bloggs is, in fact, becoming increasingly heard in the land. In urban communities, he does seem to have given up the struggle as a bad job. But it would still be possible to restore contact with him.

HOWEVER, THERE IS NOT a great deal of substance between us up to this point We are agreed that decentralisation and devolution of authority are essential, and that this message is needed to amplify and complement the otherwise unexceptional details of policy in *Putting Britain Right Ahead*. I do not doubt that the Conservative Political Centre will now plug the gap.

But so far David Howell has considered only half of his pessimistic analysis of the state of society. He says that "the country is in poor health physically *and spiritually*" (my italics). Yet he has nothing whatever to say about the "spiritual" malaise. A reference to "a belief in the dignity and the vitality of the individual" does not get us very far.

Surely this remarkable gap in the argument begs the whole essential question. Is Howell really saying that if we get our technical methods right, everyone will be happy and work like mad for the common cause? Isn't it at least as likely that until we can find a way of breaking down the dissociation of so many people from society we shall never get full value from technological advances or improvements in administration?

What does David Howell really mean by saying that the country is "spiritually" in poor health? He presumably does not mean simply that people have turned away from formal religion. If he means anything, he means exactly what I devoted half my February article to analysing: a social malaise which has involved the loss of any genuine feeling of being part of a meaningful society with common aims and ideals. I do very much hope, for the sake of society, for the sake of politics and of the Tory Party, that able young men like David Howell will turn their attention to this problem and its solution.

Angus Maude

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Pornography & the Consequences

A Reply — By GEORGE STEINER

MR. MAURICE GIRODIAS' courteous answer [ENCOUNTER, February] totally evades my argument. Nowhere in his meditations on censorship, Eros deserting his grandmother, and the rising of cathedrals is the key word *sadism* even referred to. His failure to grasp or to face the real problem compels me to restate it briefly.

Pornography has long had an intimate and crucial involvement with sadism. It revels in detailed accounts of torture and human debasement. These accounts are calculated to induce masturbation in fantasy and body. The damage done in this way is a complex, controversial issue (D. H. Lawrence judged it to be considerable). Undoubtedly, a good deal of what is channelled into fantasy or auto-eroticism might otherwise erupt as compulsive action. But it is also more than possible that pornographic sadism *does* contribute to the raw material of violence in society, to the potentiality of the inhuman in social and political conduct.

The Olympia Reader is literally packed with sadism, as is so much of Mr. Girodias' booklist. It includes lengthy descriptions of flagellation, torture, branding, enforced sodomy. Anyone wishing to get the flavour of the thing need only look at the carefully contrived bestiality and sadistic suggestion of the close of the extract from *Gaudy Image*. The page is, incidentally, graced with an illustration which would lower the tone of a lavatory wall.

We do not live in abstract eternity. We live in a period of history marked by an explosion of mass sadism and by the methodical reversion of many political communities to the use of torture. We live in a period in which files of naked men and women were made to masturbate to music or leap into cesspools to drown, and were drawn or photographed doing so, as they are drawn in *The Olympia Reader*. In the Christian literate heart of Europe, naked children were hanged on hooks (as they are hanged in the fantasies of Mr. Burroughs) while their parents were compelled to march past. There is, at present, a current of violence, neither understood nor controlled, in our politics, in our cities, in our language.

There might be placid or exceptionally stable historical epochs in which the glossy bestialities of *The Olympia Reader* would seem like mad parodies of the unreal, in which they would not relate to the concrete realities and possibilities of mass behaviour. Today they relate intensely. What is in question is not, as Mr. Girodias and Mr. Maurice Nadeau seem to suppose, the right to print even more erotica. What is in question is the future of a society mature and humane enough to produce literature, to survive the hideous barbarism it has brought forth.

A case at present *sub judice* in England suggests that a desperately ordinary person can find in de Sade the inspiration and blueprint for the degradations and murder of a child; that a little girl can be made to pose pornographically and be done to death as de Sade describes. Should the facts support this, there will be a public outcry for censorship far more strident and indiscriminate than any hitherto. But part of the responsibility will lie with that group of publishers in Paris, London, and New York who have made certain that *Justine* and *Naked Lunch* are available on every railway book-stall.

WHEN Mr. Girodias and Mr. Jean-Jacques Pauvert pontificate about the enrichments which erotica brings to art and life they go beyond what any responsible psychologist or sociologist would claim to know. The loving depictions of the whipping and humiliation of a naked woman in *L'Histoire d'O* may or may not act on the literary mind as some elaborate stylistic experiment or pastiche of libertine fiction; they may or may not seem to the less cultivated reader an almost intolerably specific incitement to realisation. We do not know. To pretend that the possibility does not exist is arrogant frivolity.

Mr. Girodias writes: "to me anything must be allowed to be published if it procures pleasure to *some* readers." "Procure": *le mot juste?* Articles and books advocating the torture and extermination of, say, Negroes or Jews doubtless "procure pleasure to *some* readers," perhaps to many. Books urging the sexual molestation of children procure pleasure to a certain number. They often have in the past. Is Mr. Girodias now

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arguing the literary rights of Herr Streicher? He goes on to the fantastic assertion that reading does "not affect other people's freedom." I can think of almost nothing that affects it more. At any moment our lives may be altered by a book. We feed on ideas and images; we enact them on ourselves and others. Mr. Girodias' logic would lead to the same conclusion as most of *The Olympia Reader*, that literature is ephemeral trash. Surely the publisher of *Lolita* knows better.

Mr. Girodias accuses me of neglecting the twentieth-century writer in favour of George Eliot and Tolstoy. Here part of the argument is bound to be circular. The verbal reticence, the imaginative subtlety and respect for privacy in the nineteenth-century novel seem to me to account for its classic status, for the fact that so little produced today is comparable in power and true excitement. But Mr. Girodias' challenge to cite modern instances of what I aim at can be met. Set against the sexual audacity of John Cowper Powys' *Wolf Solent* and *A Glastonbury Romance*, the "great liberation" of the Olympia Press is a monotonous cliché. Nothing in the twopenny sadism of *Roman Orgy* or *Gaudy Image* comes near the fearful erotic imaginings and moral exploration of Canetti's *Auto-da-fé*. Is there much in the candours of Messrs. William Burroughs and Henry Miller to match the sheer sexual intensity, the complex life quickened in our skin, nerves, brain by Lara and Zhivago or by the homosexual longings in Hermann Broch's *Death of Virgil*? But these books treat their own characters as mysteries of autonomous being; they treat language as the precarious marvel it is; they address their readers as adults capable of joining with the artist in a complicity of realisation.

Most of Mr. Richard Schechner's argument (p. 94 in this number) escapes me. I most carefully stated that we do not have enough psychological and sociological evidence to establish causal relations between pornographic and political sadism. We do know that the new barbarism and the breakdown of verbal and pictorial taboos have coincided in time. Has Mr. Schechner any notion of the mass of sadistic and anti-semitic erotica which preceded the Nazi period? Has he bothered to wonder why Céline the virtuoso of scatological narrative is also Céline the prophetic advocate of the "final solution" in *Bagatelle pour un massacre*? His invocation of John Milton in this context doesn't lead one to suppose so.

The most interesting objection to my argument to emerge from all the mail and controversy has been put by a senior member of the Kinsey Institute. He argues that the fantasy life violated by pornography, the adventure of private sexual discovery on which pornography intrudes, are the prerogative of the highly literate and leisured. He raises the question of whether or not a certain amount of pornography is not indispensable to the enrichment of sexual life among those for whom it has long been a harried, utterly conventionalised routine. Is my defence of privacy not based on class privilege? This is, obviously, a very important and intricate question. All I would say, provisionally, is that if this enrichment has to come through the idiom of Sade, the price to be paid may be large. But all this needs a great deal more thought and knowledge; and here Mr. Girodias would, I suspect, be prepared to help.

Hegel Again

I am grateful to Sidney Hook for focusing his review article [Encounter, January 1965] so sharply and accurately on the problem of Hegel's basic political attitude, which is indeed the central theme of my introduction to *Hegel's Political Writings*. I am very glad to have his support for my conviction, which was the *raison d'être* of my essay, that the political writings do throw important light on that complex and controversial problem. But I fail to grasp how after reading the political writings he can maintain his own interpretation of Hegel and dismiss so absolutely the one I have put forward. Although he professes to steer a middle course between those who, like Karl Popper, have painted Hegel in the darkest colours as a proto-Nazi and an enemy of an "open society," and those like Joachim Ritter, John Plamenatz and myself who, allegedly, seek to pass off Hegel, scrubbed and whitewashed, as "a prophet of liberalism," it is difficult to see where Professor Hook's moderation really lies. There is a difference of degree in the unobjectivity of his and Popper's approach, but basically "Hegel Rehabilitated?" is yet another political tract, an outburst of righteous liberal-democratic-radical indignation, all the more powerful and persuasive since the underlying political passion is kept under control and released in carefully graduated doses.

By imputing political passion to Professor Hook I am deliberately choosing a charitable explanation of the one-sided and tendentious account which he gives of Hegel's political atti-

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tude in his ENCOUNTER article. If I am guilty, in my interpretation of Hegel's writings, of "tortured exegesis of texts read in the light of a hypothesis assumed to be true," I hope I cannot be accused of having simplified my task by passing over substantial portions of the texts which contradicted the hypothesis. But this is just what Professor Hook has done again and again. One striking example of this technique: to show that Hegel disparaged liberty as liberal-democrats understand it, Professor Hook quotes the beginning of a paragraph in *The German Constitution*, where Hegel speaks contemptuously of a "blind clamour of freedom." Let me continue the quotation beyond the place where Professor Hook interrupts it. After the words "...trying to embrace the cloud [of freedom], the nations have flung themselves into an abyss of misery...," Hegel goes on to say,

> "...and definite concepts and forms of thought have become embodied in public opinion. Clamour for freedom will have no effect; anarchy has become distinguished from freedom; the notion that a firm government is indispensable for freedom has become deeply engraved on men's minds; *but no less deeply engraved is the notion that the people must share in the making of laws and the management of the most important affairs of state. The guarantee that the government will proceed in accordance with law, and the co-operation of the general will in the most important affairs of state which affect everyone, the people finds in the organisation of a body representative of the people.* This body has to sanction payment to the monarch of part of the national taxes, but especially the payment of extraordinary taxes. Just as in former days the most important matter, *i.e.*, personal services, depended on free agreement, so nowadays money, which comprises influence of every other kind, is equally so dependent.
>
> "Without such a representative body, freedom is no longer thinkable. Once freedom is so defined, all vague ideas vanish, along with all the emptiness of the clamour for freedom. This notion of freedom is not something, like a scientific concept, which individuals come to know by learning; on the contrary, it is a fundamental principle in public opinion; it has become part of sound common sense...." (*Hegel's Political Writings*, pp. 234, 235. My italics.)

Is this the language of an authoritarian thinker, a supporter of absolutism and fellow-traveller of reaction, to mention some of the terms Professor Hook applies to Hegel? By leaving out the rest of the passage just quoted, does he not give a wholly false impression of Hegel's concept of political freedom?

Hegel's concept of representation is certainly not "progressive" by mid-20th or even mid-19th-century standards. But is it possible to deny, on the evidence of the *Political Writings*, that he belonged to a constitutionalist or whig-liberal current of political thought, traceable to Kant, Montesquieu, Locke, and beyond, which is the source of modern liberalism? If his life-span (1770–1831) and the age-long dominance of absolutism in his native Germany are remembered, Hegel's hesitation to allow the popular masses a more influential role in government becomes perfectly intelligible. Nor does the fear of "mob rule" necessarily exclude Hegel from the liberal tradition. Unimpeachably liberal thinkers from Tocqueville and J. S. Mill to Ortega y Gasset and Walter Lippmann have been as sensitive to its dangers as he was.

Equally one-sided is Professor Hook's other view, *viz.*, that Hegel rejected absolute human rights, and paid scant attention to the interests and welfare of individuals. But Hegel regarded the guaranteeing of such rights and constitutional protection of individual interests as a mark of a rational constitution which, incidentally, contrary to what Professor Hook alleges, had according to Hegel to be formulated on the basis of universal principles. In the essay on the *Würtemberg Estates* Hegel takes for granted that rights such as "Every subject is at liberty to choose his profession and occupation according to his free inclination, and to educate himself for it" are "organic provisions which speak for themselves and make up the rational basis of constitutionalism." They must be in the constitution as "a matter of principle, *i.e.*, of rationality and absolute right." "They do the greatest honour to the prince who gave them and to the age in which constitutional law has been purged of privileges and matured into a [set] of principles." They are "universal truths of constitutionalism," and so on. Hegel never disparaged "the famous *Droits de l'homme et du citoyen*"; he only insisted that they could not be operative until they were particularised in legislation and administrative procedures. Hegel's "civil society" is precisely the sphere of the modern state where authorities of various kinds subserve individual rights, interests, and happiness. Only exigencies of public peace or national survival justify the invasion of that sphere by the "political state" as the guardian of the people's common interest.

BY CALLING Hegel a "nationalist" throughout his article Professor Hook reaches the summit of misrepresentation. Perhaps the most serious criticism that can be made of Hegel's concept of the modern state is precisely that he ignored the force of nationalism in the modern world. Probably for that very reason he considered hereditary monarchy a necessary focus of loyalty and an element of solidarity within the state.

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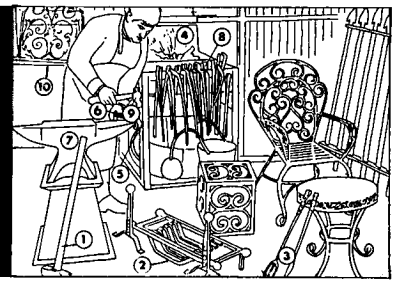
THE WROUGHT IRON WORKER



MOST VILLAGE SMITHS are able to make simple domestic articles such as fire screens **10**, fire baskets **2**, and hearth furniture **3**. Comparatively few businesses remain, however, which are capable of forging massive yet intricately worked entrance gates, church screens, or complex inn signs. Such a forge is to be found in Ickleford in Hertfordshire, a village two miles north of Hitchin on the route of the ancient British trackway, the Ichnield Way. Here, craftsmen employed by Lesley Olney and David Pither, fashion decorative metalwork of every description. Address: Olney and Newbury Ltd., Ickleford, Hitchin, Herts. (Shell Touring Map No. 3 from your dealer.)

The techniques employed come down to us from antiquity. The tough, unyielding bar of iron is heated to the required temperature in the fierce concentrated heat of the compact fire of coal or coke breeze **4**. The glowing bar **5**, now firmly held **6** is deftly swung across to the steel anvil **7**. Short lengths have to be held in tongs **8**. There the bar is quickly hammered into shape **9**. On heavier work a sledge **1** is used by the smith's striker.

Decorative features used on wrought ironwork include flowing scrolls, a variety of hot and cold twists, and delicately ribbed and curled water acanthus leaves. Many of these are seen in the ornate fire screen **10**. The workshops are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays; from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturdays and at other times by appointment.

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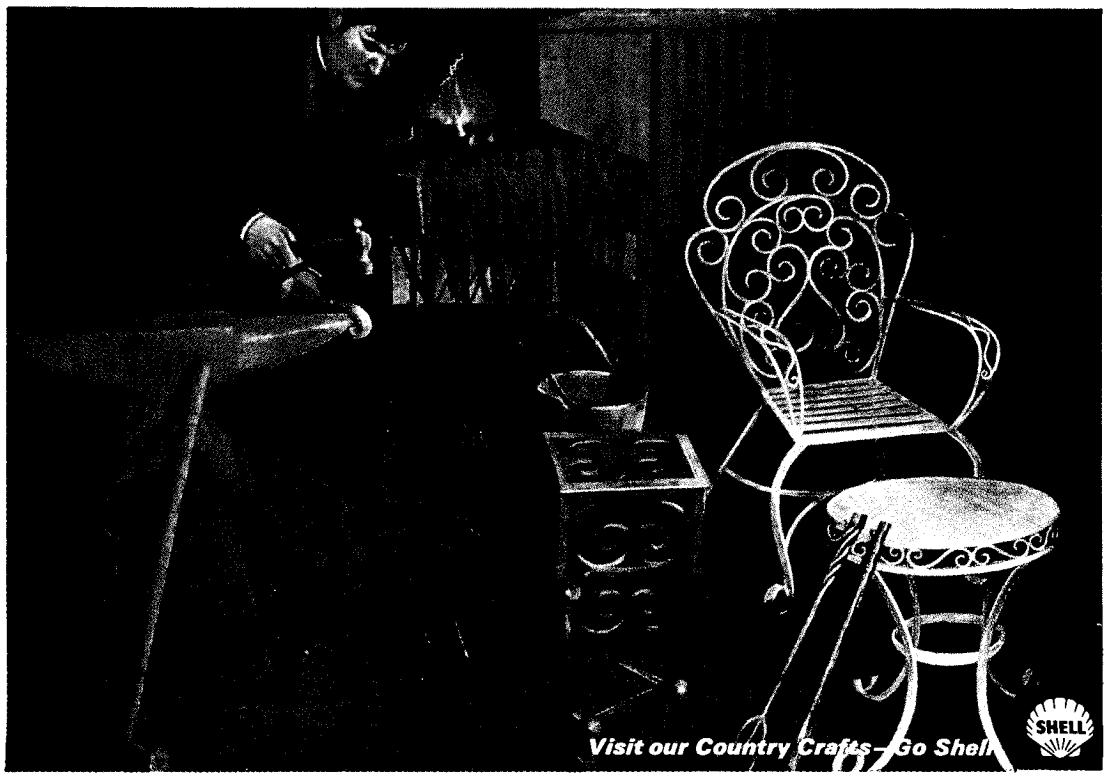

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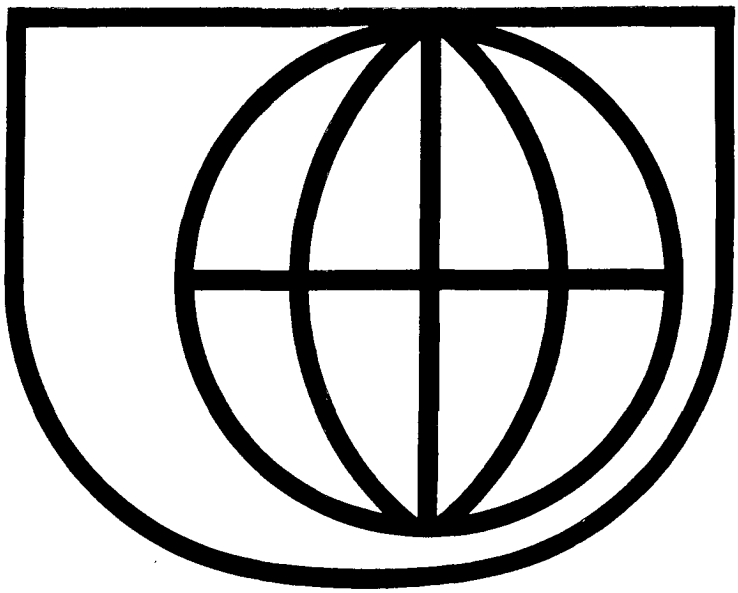

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It is true that in *The German Constitution* Hegel resented the humiliation of Germany by France and was preoccupied with German unity,[1] but shortly afterwards Hegel abandoned all thought of German unification and in 1818 openly welcomed the creation of a sovereign Würtemberg state as "one of the actual German realms which are taking the place of the nonentity which had borne only the empty name of an 'Empire.'..." In the preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel showed unmistakable hostility to the idea of immediate German unity. One can, in his later life, accuse him of Prussian patriotism but never of German nationalism. His position was that any state was worthy of loyalty and obedience as long as it was rationally organised, whether its population formed one nation, a section of a nation, or a group of nations.

Equally incorrect, I suggest, is Professor Hook's interpretation of Hegel's attitude to the French Revolution. There is much that Hegel disliked about the Revolution or, more strictly, the period of revolutionary changes between 1789 and 1815 which have frequently been lumped together. But it is undeniable that he regarded the Revolution (in this wider sense) as the most significant event in modern history since the Reformation. The evidence for it is not in anecdotes about dancing round a freedom tree or drinking toasts on Bastille Day, but in Hegel's public pronouncements. In the essay on *Würtemberg Estates* (published when Hegel was forty-eight and a professor at Heidelberg) he calls the years since 1789 "possibly the richest that the world history has had and for us the most instructive because our world and our ideas belong to them." And in his lectures on *The Philosophy of History*, last delivered at Berlin University shortly before his death, Hegel interpreted the Revolution as the culmination of the process of liberating mankind from the shackles of tradition, prejudice, and dogma which began in the Reformation, and the beginning of the re-shaping of social and political reality by rational thought, "a glorious mental dawn." How can Professor Hook label Hegel an opponent of the Revolution and a conservative when Hegel almost foamed at the mouth at the mention of "antiquity," "wisdom of forefathers," "veneration of the past," and consistently championed the fundamental principle of the Revolution that in the social and political sphere "nothing should be recognised as valid unless its recognition accorded with the right of reason."[2]

The argument that Hegel turned the significance of the Revolution upside down by giving "reason" and "rational" a special and sinister meaning is rather weak. Whatever the metaphysical nuances and implications of these terms, on the practical and political level which is at issue between Professor Hook and myself, Hegel's "reason" and "rational" incorporate most, if not all, the substance of what revolutionary thinkers meant by these terms. Hegel did not reject their ideas *in toto*; he merely argued that in the name of logic they pressed "freedom," "equality," "popular sovereignty," etc., to extreme and therefore untenable conclusions and paid inadequate attention to the social and political costs of their schemes. He was profoundly sceptical of impatient perfectionism, and saw that no state could subsist without reconciling immaculate revolutionary ideals and other principles, *i.e.*, authority, solidarity, hierarchy, and so on. As Hegel said in *The German Constitution*, freedom without order was anarchy, just as strong government without people's participation was tyranny.

Professor Hook dubbed this aspect of Hegel's attitude "unheroic conservatism," but this label, like his whole approach, is fundamentally unfair. There is nothing unheroic about the determination, so clearly stated (*e.g.*, at the beginning of *The English Reform Bill* or in the preface to the *Philosophy of Right*) to criticise shallow ideas even when they are fashionable or can command a large popular following. There is nothing unheroic in telling social and political thinkers *hic Rhodus, hic saltus*: stop dreaming about utopias and give us theories by which we can understand reality and shape it in the light of our ideals. There is nothing unheroic about the attempt (however premature) to discover, beneath the flux of events, the shape of the emerging modern state. Not "unheroic conservatism" but "heroic realism" is the *mot juste* for Hegel's basic attitude.

LONG BEFORE THE TIME of Hegel or Thomas Paine there had been a tradition of constitutional government, rule of law, and civil rights. Generations of thinkers who had died long before them had rejected the claims of *mere*

[1] Even that work is largely free from the nationalist myths ("organic unity," "intrinsic superiority," "civilising mission") which later Fichte and others were to popularise in Germany.

[2] It can be granted that Hegel was not "progressive" in the sense of going beyond the Revolution in propounding new principles. He merely demanded the realisation of principles already asserted in the French Revolution. Yet the political rights which he advocated were still largely denied in central, eastern, and southern Europe, and even in western Europe many civil rights were still withheld (*e.g.*, Jews, Dissenters, and Catholics in Britain).

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tradition and ancient institutions, and advocated a rational approach to political problems. In that sense, neither Hegel nor Paine were prophets of liberalism, but the one and the other shared its fundamental assumptions. They belonged, if I may so put it, to the right and the left of liberalism. One's preference for one or the other is largely a matter of taste and temperament. Few would deny, however, that the modern liberal democratic state is characterised by strong central government, a powerful executive, a large bureaucratic and military apparatus, an establishment of professional politicians, the organisation of the electorate into mass political parties and a complex network of organised interest groups. This inescapable reality bears far closer resemblance to Hegel's concept of the modern state than do the pipedreams of early republicans, democrats, and radicals. My reply to Professor Hook's raised eyebrows about "Hegel Rehabilitated?" is—yes.

Z. A. Pelczynski

"Reactionary Keynesianism"

THERE are many signs that the "post-War" is over. The Cold War has changed basically, in part because of the evolution of Russian Communism. The time of formal decolonisation is coming to an end, and with it, some of the more optimistic myths about the "Third World" are dying. As Andrew Shonfield argued in his three recent articles [ENCOUNTER, June, August, October, 1965], capitalism seems to be entering into a qualitatively new stage in which Governments consciously pursue, and attain, full employment and an accelerated pace of technological change becomes a normal, restless fact of life.

On the whole, I think Mr. Shonfield is right to see the fundamental changes taking place within capitalist society. Indeed, I suspect that the ethic and psychology of the system is being destroyed in the process. I share a great deal of Mr. Shonfield's analysis, but perhaps it would be useful to go through some of the differences between us.

In his second article, "The Progress (and Perils) of Planning," Mr. Shonfield says that post-War capitalism has learned to use subtle techniques for managing an economy. This development was anticipated by Keynes "with extraordinary prescience," for Keynes realised that the "deliberate control of credit by a central institution, and... the collection and dissemination on a great scale of data relating to the business situation" provided society with the tools of a "directive intelligence."

> It bears saying again [Shonfield concludes] how much more profound was this Keynesian vision of control through a combination of financial pressure and improved economic information, than the socialist formula... of capturing the "commanding heights" of the economy.

Now unquestionably Keynes made an enormous, and perhaps decisive, contribution to the reform of capitalism. And it is also true that the socialists after World War I were extremely deficient in immediate and practical programmes and sometimes even believed that if you couldn't make a total revolution, then it was necessary to adhere to the conservative principles of classic economics. Thus, my argument with Shonfield's appraisal is not historical; it relates to the present and future.

Since the Goldwater defeat in 1964, President Johnson has more or less kept his electoral coalition together. It includes both sophisticated big business and the trade unionists, Southern "moderates" and militant Civil Rights activists. Its economic philosophy, as expressed in the cutting of income, corporation, and excise taxes, is Keynesianism of a sort. The immediate results have been, at first glance, most gratifying: a booming economy, a reduction of unemployment to 4·6 per cent (it is scandalous, and a fact, that such a joblessness figure looks good to many an economist after years of a chronic unemployment rate over 5 per cent), fantastic profits (last year, General Motors made more money than was appropriated this year for the War on Poverty). All of this would seem to confirm Shonfield's point of view.

And yet, John Kenneth Galbraith was quite right to warn last winter that there is such a thing as "reactionary Keynesianism." Galbraith told a Congressional committee:

> "I am not quite sure what the advantage is in having a few more dollars to spend if the air is too dirty to breathe, the water too polluted to

MICHAEL HARRINGTON *is the author of the famous study of poverty in the U.S.A.,* The Other America, *which must now be reckoned as one of the most influential political pamphlets of our day (having led directly to the dramatic Johnsonian "Anti-Poverty Programme"). He lives in New York and has just published a book on problems of technology,* The Accidental Century (*Macmillan, New York and Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London*).

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drink, the commuters are losing out in the struggle to get in and out of the city, the streets are filthy, and the schools so bad that the young perhaps wisely stay away, and hoodlums roll citizens for some of the dollars they saved in the tax."

For the fact of the matter is that reactionary Keynesianism can reinforce the contrast, brilliantly analysed by Galbraith in *The Affluent Society*, between the opulence of the private sector and the squalor of the public sector. (Needless to say, the poor in such a situation suffer from terrible deficiencies in *both* personal and social consumption.)

Thus, in the United States it is quite possible to envisage a conservative Keynesian policy which substitutes tax cuts for social investments, increases the maldistribution of income (the rich and the corporations gain more from tax cuts than the workers and the poor) *and* maintains a prosperity as that term would be defined by business. But then, Mr. Shonfield might reply that all this is simply a consequence of the American phobia about the public sector and that it does not apply to the European economies which have embarked on indicative planning. Moreover, Shonfield could argue that he specifically noted that Keynes was not sufficiently concerned about the problem of economic growth, that he limited himself to seeking full employment within the framework of an existing industrial plant. All this is true. Yet, I think there is a tendency analogous to "reactionary Keynesianism" in the advanced European nations and that it operates precisely through planning and public sectors. On either side of the Atlantic, the economic integration brought about by the state is still dominated by private purposes. This does not call the efficiency of Shonfield's model into issue, but it does raise disturbing questions about its social effect.

In France, for example, Mr. Shonfield is optimistic about programming a social purpose into the Plan and thus making a more just allocation of resources as well as stimulating and integrating the economy as a whole. Yet—and this impinges on the very important problem of planning and democracy which Mr. Shonfield raises—the planning process there is dominated by businessmen and state functionaries. In a good many cases, as Mendès-France pointed out in his *La Republique Moderne*, even the governmentally-owned sector is more concerned with profit than with the Plan and acts accordingly. The "counter-plan" put forward by the *Parti Socialiste Unifié* this year does suggest the very real possibility that the new plan is not as social as Mr. Shonfield would hope.

More recently, M. François Mitterand charged that the social intention of the Plan and the reality of the budget were at odds. The workers, Mitterand argued, are actually being required to carry an increasing share of the cost of the Plan; Paris had forced the localities to share the funds for many of their own communal needs. In general, the Fourth Plan had not realised its own stated aspirations and the Fifth would not either.

Much of this comes down to a single, fundamental point. Where the state intervenes through fiscal and monetary policy and through planning and thus makes the economy more prosperous, stable, and efficient, the chief beneficiaries will be the corporations and the wealthy. A few years ago, Gilbert Mathieu argued that the effect of planning in France had been, among other things, to accentuate the maldistribution of income. This kind of inequity could mean that private interests reap the profits from a state which operates as a tax-supported institute for the best in market research.

This "reactionary Keynesian" pattern is, of course, not inevitable. To offset it, it is necessary that the Government actually allocate resources to the social sector in a massive way and that it follow out a progressive, redistributive tax policy. Without being apocalyptic or romantic about it, I would suggest that such an approach does require a democratic political countervalence to, an encroachment upon and eventual elimination of, the private control of the commanding heights of the economy. For with that control there goes effective power over the tax cut, or even the Plan. With so many variables still up in the air, no one has a miraculous programme to transform this reality overnight, much less to organise political support for it. But we still should not lose sight of the homely, old-fashioned, and sectarian truth that the efficient operation of a capitalist economy disproportionately and unjustly rewards capitalists, ignores urgent social priorities and maldistributes wealth, unless there are strong countermeasures which substitute political decisions for economic "laws."

Finally, let me turn to one of the many points where I think Mr. Shonfield is asking the right, basic question: the relationship between the expertise required for planning and democratic political control.

In France, the planning commissions are dominated by businessmen; but, some have said, the workers and agriculturists have simply not taken the seats that have been assigned to them. This misses a crucial fact. Several years ago in Paris, I talked to trade unionists about this argument. They explained that they simply could not afford research staffs, with the tech-

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nical proficiency to understand the policy implications of many of the figures that were put before them. The companies, on the other hand, could hire talent to make sense out of the various equations.

It seems to me that, as planning becomes a permanent institution in Western society, it is necessary to address ourselves to this issue. Perhaps voluntary, non-Governmental groups which participate in the planning process should be given a state subsidy so that they can have *their* experts. And if a really careful consideration and understanding of a plan does require a familiarity with econometric equations, it would still be quite possible to translate basic priorities into the vernacular: whether, for example, there should be a reduction in the working day or an increase in production in some vital sphere of social need.

In any case, the real issue before the advanced Western nations is, as Mr. Shonfield says, how to make a planned economy responsive to the democratic need and will. "Reactionary Keynesianism," in its American or European variants, will certainly not do this. And this is why I think some of those very old issues of economic power are still there, still must be solved, even now that capitalism has changed itself so very much.

Michael Harrington

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Modernisms

Cyril Connolly and Others — By FRANK KERMODE

A FEW WEEKS ago there was an advertisement in *The New York Review of Books* for a novel—an "ardent novel available only by mail"—described by its publishers as "the story of a *modern* American marriage." A favourable review is cited; this explains that "the painfully significant enigma" of modern marriage is the ambition and aggressiveness of woman. The husband in Meredith's sequence, lying there in tragic parody of a knight on a tomb, thought it was her infidelity. To both novelist and poet, "modern" seems to mean something not altogether agreeable and disturbingly at odds with the way things used to be. If pressed, they might talk about radical changes in sensibility, as they affect love. Pressed harder, they might have to admit that ambition, aggression, infidelity, are no newer in women than refined or perverse sensibility in men.

The fact is that we all use the word in this unexamined way, and nobody notices how nearly meaningless it is until called to order by some pronouncement about The Modern. The context will usually be aesthetic, but even this limitation is not enough to ensure accurate definition. In 1894 John Lane announced that his *Yellow Book* "would seek always to preserve a delicate, decorous and reticent mien and conduct" but "at the same time have the courage of its modernness"; that it would be "charming," "daring" and "distinguished." The first number included a poem by Gosse, Saintsbury on wine, and a very good story by James, but only Beerbohm's "Defence of Cosmetics" could be called "daring" or, in its fashion, courageously modern. Later this might be said of the realism of Crackanthorpe; for modernism was not only the dangerous line of Beardsley, the clever excess of Wilde and Beerbohm; it was also the French cult of things as they now are. These two modernist strains were well distinguished by Arthur Waugh, in his attack on the magazine; he found on the one hand "a want of restraint which starts from enervated sensations," and on the other an "excess which results from a certain brutal virility," itself the consequence of "coarse familiarity with indulgence." Or you might say, exquisite sensibility and realism. The new sensibility required formal experiment, which was therefore associated with "decadence"; squatness and ugliness of presentation, a prudent lack of enterprise in content, could now confer upon publishers who declined the financial and social risks of modernity a certain adventitious virtue. "Modernness," in its Flaubertian alliance of formal experiment and realism, took over the old role of shock and protest, and its practitioners dissociated themselves from many concerns that seemed characteristically bourgeois, such as politics.

POLITICS RETURNED in a later phase of modernism, and has now gone away again; on the whole one would want to say that politics has no essential part in the Movement. If there is a persistent world-view it is one we should have to call apocalyptic; the modernism of the 'Nineties has a recognisable touch of this, if decadence, hope of renovation, the sense of transition, the sense of an ending or the trembling of the veil, are accepted as its signs. At such times there is a notable urgency in the proclamation of a break with the immediate past, a stimulating sense of crisis, of an historical licence for the New. And there appears to be a genuine continuity here, for all modernist art and literature between the 'Nineties and now is associated with similar assumptions in some form or other. Naturally the contents of *The Yellow Book* have long ceased to look modernist; its cosmetic avant-gardism is archaic, as neurasthenia is archaic; its artists were not only Beardsley and Conder but Puvis de Chavannes and Moreau. The radical changes that were *implied*, somehow, by what they were doing—revolutions in architecture, music, painting and poetry of which the historical sources were already available—were of a kind that shocked such a survivor as Beerbohm and forced Yeats to accept the necessity to "remake" himself. The difference between

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The Yellow Book and, say, *Blast*, indicates that however persistent the apocalyptic background may have been, some pretty radical changes of manner had occurred. The 'Nineties were certainly precursors, but anybody who thinks about what modernism now means will rightly look more closely at the period between 1907 and, say, 1925; this is true despite the fact that the "aestheticist" element in later modernism is often underplayed, and still accounts for that disregard of politics in relation to literature characteristic of so much modern criticism, so that Conor Cruise O'Brien justly but hopelessly complains that even intelligent critics are "acute on small matters and absent-minded on very large ones."[1]

THERE is at present much interest in this question of the modern. Last year Professors Ellmann and Feidelson published a huge "casebook" on the subject[2]; it was a work of which Professor O'Brien might well complain in the same terms, but it was also a serious attempt to get into one volume most of the radical documents of modernism, to explain the parts of Kant and Blake, Nietzsche and Darwin, Wilde and Pater, as well as Apollinaire and Tzara, Werner Heisenberg and Karl Jaspers. Now Mr. Cyril Connolly, by way of choosing and describing its "100 Key Books," has undertaken to characterise what he calls *The Modern Movement*.[3] He limits himself to the years between 1880 and 1950, and to works in English and French. The American book is vast, solemn, and not easy to get on with; Mr. Connolly's is light, bright, superficially stylish; but the Americans offer much useful and reliable information. Mr. Connolly's book does not. It is careless as to detail; the date of Spender's *Struggle of the Modern* is wrong, the *Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* is put thirteen years too late, the publication dates of *Four Quartets* are not accurate; you will search the *Inferno* in vain for a passage on Arnaut Daniel. Mr. Connolly likes Yeats and quotes him, apparently, from memory; but what he actually wrote about the first night of *Ubu Roi* was "After us the Savage God." Perhaps one can take the misprint *Little Gitting* as an unconscious tribute to a contemporary poet and biographer of Keats; but whoever suggests that the opening line of *The Winding Stair* is "The *calm* of evening, Lissadell" may be called upon to prove that he can be trusted with a great poem.

It seems a pity that Mr. Connolly, so well equipped by temperament and experience, should have settled for *sprezzatura*.. and forsworn accuracy and sometimes thought itself. He sneers at professional students not for their real faults but because they get things right, and at "theses" because they begin when "the Titans depart"; yet after all he is a professional student, and this is a thesis, written, on the author's view, when the Titans have departed, arguing a view of a literary period, and complete with a bibliography (admittedly by another professional hand, and not in any case very useful). Whether we call it a thesis or not, it too often lapses into its own kind of nonsense and bad writing: "As all objectives were gained and the complacent hypocrisy of the nineteenth century punctured, its materialism exposed, the Movement ground to a halt." It is hard to say whether a good supervisor would be more depressed by the historical generalisation or by the prose.

However, Mr. Connolly is not wholly serious. That books are written in German or Russian will not prevent some of them from being "Key Books," and he also omits all books he does not like (Claudel, Stein); all books that are not both good and rebellious, as well as historically important; and all books that are simply thinkbooks (Bergson, Freud, Russell, Wittgenstein, etc.). With what is left he is pleasantly dogmatic. The Modernists inherited "critical intelligence" from the Enlightenment, and "exploring sensibility" from the Romantics. As near as it can be dated, the union of these qualities occurred around 1880; the Journals of Baudelaire and the *Bouvard et Pécuchet* of Flaubert ("our two fallen fathers") appeared posthumously in the following year. Mr. Connolly's comment on Baudelaire can only reinforce the strong sense we may already have of slapdash unexamined history; he claims that this poet, "after being for many years the private literary property of Arthur Symons... has emerged to be re-interpreted by Sartre and magnificently translated by Robert Lowell." After 1880 modernism came on in waves: the generation of James, Mallarmé, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Huysmans, is followed by that of Debussy, Yeats, Proust, Jarry, Valéry, and that by the generation of Eliot, Pound, Lawrence and Joyce; and so on. Admittedly such lists don't lend themselves to fine distinctions and discriminations, but this one makes the subject sound unintelligibly weird.

It is true that there was a sort of *translatio studii moderni* from France to England and America, and that the peak period of the Movement must be placed somewhere around 1910–1925, as Connolly says. But it is begging

[1] *Writers and Politics* (Chatto, 25s.).

[2] *The Modern Tradition* (Backgrounds of Modern Literature). Edited by Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson, Jr. Oxford University Press, New York, 78s., $9.75.

[3] *The Modern Movement. 100 Key Books from England, France and America, 1880–1950.* (Deutsch & Hamish Hamilton, 15s.

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many questions to argue that after the death of Virgina Woolf and Yeats the Movement became "degenerate." He avoids some difficulties by saying that Beckett, together with Robbe-Grillet and Butor, "falls just outside my dateline" (*whoroscope*, 1930, *Proust*, 1931, *More Pricks than Kicks*, 1934, above all *Murphy*, 1938). The "frustrated 'forties" saw the end of the Movement. Burroughs and the Beats represent a continuing rebelliousness here attributed merely to the prevalence in America of "unrevised attitudes to drug-addiction and homosexuality." The best Mr. Connolly can say about the future is that the Movement's "twin features," described arbitrarily as "faith in the intellect" and "belief in the validity of the imagination," together with "the enlargement of sensibility," will again "inspire a masterpiece."

IT ALL SOUNDS much too simple, and it is—labels are doing the work, announced as a labour of historical enquiry; words such as "imagination" and "sensibility" are being left to get on with it while the author chats brightly. Why did the Movement peter out? Because there were so many defectors from Humanism: "some followed Huysmans into the religious fold (Eliot, Edith Sitwell, Waugh, Auden), some became fascists (Pound, Lewis) etc." Subsequently modernism flourishes best in the theatre, where there is more to rebel against (Artaud, Ionesco, Pinter). If anybody would have been more surprised than Wyndham Lewis to be called a humanist or a defector from humanism, it might perhaps have been Artaud. Malraux defected from humanism by becoming a politician. What can "humanism" mean in this discussion where "dehumanisation" is more commonly regarded as a symptom of the modern? Well, Gide and Forster perhaps; but when one speaks of their humanism one is simply in a different context from that appropriate to a discussion of modernism. By his abuse of this word, and in an entirely different way, of "sensibility," Mr. Connolly simply obscures this interesting issue; his book will add confusion where there is enough already.

I HAVE SO FAR said nothing of the books chosen. They are listed in chronological order, each with a chatty paragraph; *Bel Ami*, for example:

> Born in 1850, Maupassant died insane from syphilis in 1893. "Another man for the scrap-heap," he cried to his valet.... Patron saint of best sellers, he has profoundly influenced Maugham....

Number 1 is *Portrait of a Lady*, Number 100 is *Paterson*. Among the books mentioned which seem to be there not for their "modernness" but because the compiler likes them are *Siren Land* (hard by Apollinaire and Proust), *The Casuarina Tree*, *Sanctuary* ("Critics enthuse on *The Sound and the Fury*.... *Sanctuary*, however... is Faulkner for the non-Faulknerites"), *Animal Farm*, and the *Selected Poems* of John Betjeman. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Sea and Sardinia* get in, but not *Women in Love*. On the whole, however, the list, within its limits, is not unreasonable; only the comments are deplorable. The 'Twenties, Mr. Connolly's favourite decade, are celebrated by comment on *Ulysses* equally jejune in praise and condemnation, on Radiguet mere gossip, without the slightest justification for the choice, and on Wallace Stevens hasty and meaningless patter. *The Great Gatsby* is a "light-hearted masterpiece of the boom years," but its contemporary, *The Sun Also Rises*, unites "post-war disillusion and the post-war liberation... in the physical enjoyment of living and the pains of love. Perhaps that is what expatriation was about." It is hard even to see what this means.

The 'Thirties—the "disastrous decade"—were devoted to "lost causes like anti-fascism"; nevertheless, this was "a good period to be young in" since the world was "still open for the traveller (Bali, Afghanistan, etc.)." The 'Forties account for twelve books, including *Darkness at Noon*, *Another Time* (though *Poems*, 1930, did not make it), the two Orwells, Betjeman. *Paterson*, however, makes a good modernist noise at the close, and Williams' "Nothing is good save the new" neatly echoes Baudelaire at the outset: "*Au fond de l'Inconnu pour trouver du nouveau.*"

IT SHOULD NOW BE CLEAR that if you want to know what Baudelaire and Williams are talking about this poor little book, so unworthy of its author, will not help you to find out. What will? Since there is so much talk about these and related matters at the moment, it might be useful to look about for recent writing that has something to say. With this in mind, and perhaps somewhat naïvely, I turn to a very large new *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*[4] and look up "modernism." This volume is the work of very learned contributors and editors. If you want to look up *meiosis* or *meiurus*, *payada* or *penthemimer*; if you need a quick run through Albanian, Byelorussian, Danish, Persian, Romansh or Yiddish poetry; if you are disturbed by the problems of belief, meaning, intention, or by the relationship of poetry with science or religion; if more modern critical

[4] Edited by ALEX PREMINGER. *Princeton University Press*, New Jersey, $20, *Oxford University Press*, London, £10.

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terms baffle you, and you are interested in *tenor and vehicle, symbol, pseudo-statement, tension, ambiguity, aesthetic distance*; or in the vexed problems associated with *baroque, mannerist, conceit,* then on all this and more you will as a rule be amply supplied. But if you look up "modernism" you will be told that it was "the movement in Hispanic letters which began in the 1880s in Sp. America, blending Sp., Fr., and other foreign influences...." Hard by, however, there is a long entry on *Modern Poetics*; it begins at 1750, which is justifiable, and begins to cater for our present interest when it reaches, after much scholarly explanation, our fallen father Baudelaire and his accursed sons the Symbolists. They were in favour of music and against logic (of course; and for all Mr. Connolly says anti-intellectualism is a characteristic of the modern)—and they gave rise to a newly orientated poetry, arcane even when colloquial, interested in mental states below consciousness ("extended sensibility") and prolific of very difficult notions, such as Rilke's *Dinge* and Imagism and the vorticised or classicised Symbolism of Hulme, Pound, and Eliot. Hence "the theoretical banishment from poetry (we might add the visual arts) of much that has been generally thought to give it seriousness"; and hence also a number of baffling ambiguities in the terminology, still troublesome; for it is hard to say what, for example, "imagist" means, and even harder to be clear about "abstraction" (good in, say, Worringer and Stevens, bad, generally, in the literary critics)[5] or even "intellect," an anti-poetic instrument which poets are always blamed for not using.

There is some use in the *Encyclopedia* article; it ends with a very cautious statement of one of the major issues in later modernism, warning us that if we think poetry "the completest mode of utterance" we should not be too anxious to separate it from other forms of discourse. Can "art" and "life" really be as discontinuous as the early modernists implied? More of that later, when it will emerge, I think, that poetry is not the best point of departure here. The theory behind very modern poems (like, for example, the enchanting "Message Clear" of Edwin Morgan, in the *T.L.S.*, 13 January 1966) seems to derive from the thinking of artists and musicians, and finally we shall have to turn to them. The poetry encyclopaedia has, not surprisingly, no entry under *avant-garde* or New, though there are the Neoterici of Cicero to prove how old the New really is, as well as the

[5] The *Encyclopedia*, I have just confirmed, provides a good brief account, under *Concrete and Abstract*, of the way they use such words.

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New Criticism, now worn out, and the New Humanism, another historical description. It does not help us much with the modern Modern, the new New.

Professors Ellmann and Feidelson find the concept of the modern "intimate and elusive" but are quite sure it does not refer, as some now argue, only to what was happening almost half a century back; according to them, it "designates a distinctive kind of imagination, themes and forms, conditions and modes of creation, that are interrelated, and comprise an imaginative whole." This suggests a sort of imaginative mutation, ways of looking and making virtually unrelated to older ones; and that is another frequent claim one should look into. But it also suggests, and rightly, that we will agree to call a great many different things modern—not only the novel I mentioned at the start, or *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* ("strange love talk, is it not?" as Meredith remarked) but all manner of superficially incompatible things: *Howl* and *The Waste Land*. Cubism and Pop Art, Stravinsky and Stockhausen, Gaudier-Brzeska and Tinguely. Other things we shall most of us agree not to call modern: Meredith, for instance, Verlaine; and some we're not sure about: Freud, for example. We might even agree, at any rate so far as the arts are concerned, to a useful rough distinction between two phases of modernism, and call them palaeo- and neo-modernism; they are equally devoted to the theme of crisis, equally apocalyptic; but although they have this and other things in common, they have differences which might, with some research, be defined, and found not to be of a degree that prevents our calling both "modernist."

BEFORE these or any other phenomena are called "modern" there must, presumably, be a general sense of escaping from an older state of affairs, an *ancient* state of affairs. *Devotio moderna* was not only a movement for a new morality and a new piety, but a movement against pilgrimages and excessive ornament. The Moderns of the 17th century had a programme with a similar double aspect. Their enemies would call it a preference for grubs and darkness over sweetness and light, but in its positive aspect it was a programme calling for new knowledge and assuming such knowledge could be made relevant to human concerns; while in its negative aspect it contested the view that the culture of their time necessarily imitated and must always be a derivative of ancient culture. This was perhaps the decisive confrontation, involving as it did the overthrow of ideologies both ecclesiastical and secular: the revision of the theologian's *curiositas*, which limited the bounds of intellectual enquiry in one way, and of the secular ideologies, imperial or sentimental-republican, which insisted upon classical norms and tended to equate change with decay. This was the Modernism that created a climate in which hypothesis and fiction replace myth, in which the nature of ideologies is to undergo rapid alteration and fragmentation, as ours do. Imperialism, republicanism, and classicism survive, of course, but much fragmented and modified, and usually in a posture of resistance. In short, the great 17th-century Modernism involved getting out from under something, and modernist programmes have the habit of claiming that this is what they always have to undertake.

What we got out from under is one of those questions that set up, it seems, an infinite recession. Certainly it wasn't Victorian complacency, as Mr. Connolly is satisfied to say; and the reason why the American scholars find themselves reprinting Goethe and Kant is quite simply that the historical study of modernism will certainly take you back there, and beyond, to the 17th century obviously, and less obviously beyond that. This was long ago recognised, but stated in a distorted way, by those who sought parallels between the two periods as each exhibiting the catastrophes that come from too much brain and too "abstract" sensibility. It is now much more fashionable to regard our plight as without parallel, and the past as irrelevant—an equally misleading error, and one which is responsible for further ideological muddle, as well as for certain false oppositions between palaeo- and neo-modernisms.

NOTHING CAN SO MUDDLE argument as the claim that there exist no standards by which an argument can be judged, or even no language in which it can be opposed; this claim is now supported by several influential epoch-makers, notably Marshall McLuhan, an admirable and fertile enquirer who has brought science fiction to history and sociology. There are other theorists who overdevelop the metaphor of a cultural *mutation* and say that this renders the old "humanism" powerless to judge or communicate, since the mutants speak an anti-language and aim at anti-art, anti-ethics, anti-sex; and instead of merely revising the concept of form—as the Romantics and the palaeo-modernists did—have abolished it. Indeed, if we want to understand the similarities and differences between the modernisms we shall have to look at this question of form more closely, and one way to do it is to introduce into the discussion some books and articles which seem to have a more direct view of the problem than any I have cited so far; this I'll do next time.

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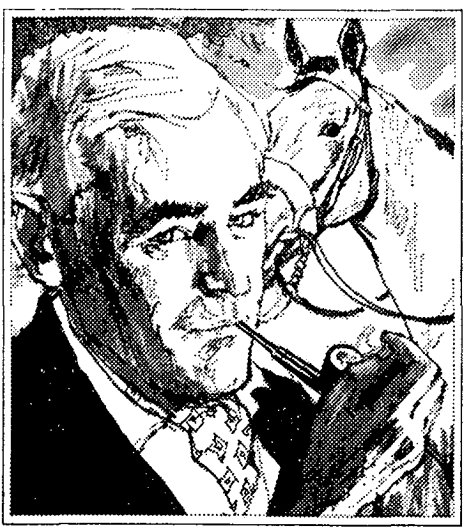

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I. B. Singer

By Irving Howe

—Would it be fair to say that you are actually writing in a somewhat artificial or illusory context, as if none of the terrible things that have happened to the Jewish people during the last two decades really did occur?

SINGER: *Yes, very fair. There was a famous philosopher, Vaihinger, who wrote a book called* The Philosophy of "As If" *in which he showed that we all behave "as if." The "as if" is so much a part of our life that it really isn't artificial.... Every man assumes he will go on living. He behaves as if he will never die. So I wouldn't call my attitude artificial. It's very natural and healthy. We have to go on living and writing.*

—But do you agree that at the heart of your attitude there is an illusion which is consciously sustained?

SINGER: *Yes.*

NO OTHER LIVING WRITER has yielded himself so completely and recklessly as has Isaac Bashevis Singer to the claims of the human imagination. Singer writes in Yiddish, a language that no amount of energy or affection seems likely to save from extinction. He writes about a world that is gone, destroyed with a brutality beyond historical comparison. He writes within a culture, the remnant of Yiddish in the Western world, that is more than a little dubious about his purpose and stress. He seems to take entirely for granted his role as a traditional story-teller speaking to an audience attuned to his every hint and nuance, an audience that values story-telling both in its own right and as a binding communal action—but also, as it happens, an audience that keeps fading week by week, shrinking day by day. And he does all this without a sigh or apology, without so much as a Jewish groan. It strikes one as a kind of inspired madness: here is a man living in New York City, a sophisticated and clever writer, who composes stories about places like Frampol, Bilgoray, Kreshev, *as if they were still there*. His work is shot through with the bravado of a performer who enjoys making his listeners gasp, weep, laugh and yearn for more. Above and beyond everything else he is a great performer, in ways that remind one of Twain, Dickens, Sholom Aleichem.

Singer writes Yiddish prose with a verbal and rhythmic brilliance that, to my knowledge, can hardly be matched. When Eliezer Greenberg and I were working on our *Treasury of Yiddish Stories*, he said to me: "Singer has to be heard, to be believed." Behind the prose there is always a spoken voice, tense, ironic, complex in tonalities, leaping past connectives. Greenberg then read to me, with a fluency and pith I could never capture in my own reading of Yiddish, Singer's masterpiece, *Gimpel the Fool*, and I knew at once (it took no great powers of judgment) that here was the work of a master. The story came as a stroke of revelation, like a fiction by Babel or Kleist encountered for the first time.

Singer's stories claim attention through their vivacity and strangeness of surface. He is devoted to the grotesque, the demonic, the erotic, the quasi-mystical. He populates his alien subworld with imps, devils, whores, fanatics, charlatans, spirits in seizure, disciples of false messiahs. A young girl is captured by the spirit of a dead woman and goes to live with the mourning husband as if she were actually his wife; a town is courted and then shattered by a lavish stranger who turns out to be the devil; an ancient Jew suffering unspeakable deprivations during the first World War, crawls back to his village of Bilgoray and fathers a son whom, with marvellous aplomb, he names Isaac. Sometimes the action in Singer's stories follows the moral curve of traditional folk tales, with a charming, lightly-phrased "lesson" at the end; sometimes, the spiral of a quizzical modern awareness; at best, the complicated motions of the old and the contemporary yoked together, a kind of narrative double-stop.

Orgiastic lapses from the moral order, pacts with the devil, ascetic self-punishments, distraught sexuality occupy the foreground of Singer's stories. Yet behind this expressionist clamour there is glimpsed the world of the *stetl,* or East European Jewish village, as it stumbled and slept through the last few centuries. Though Singer seldom portrays it full-face, one must always keep this world in mind while reading his stories: it forms the base from which he wanders, the norm from which he deviates but which controls his deviation. And truly to hear these stories one must have at least

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a splinter of knowledge about the culture from which Singer comes, the world he continues to evoke as if it were still radiantly alive: the Hasidim still dancing, the rabbis still pondering, the children still studying, the poor still hungering as if it had not all ended in ashes and death.

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER was born in Radzymin, Poland, in 1904. Both his father and grandfather were rabbis, in the tradition of Hasidism, a kind of ecstatic pietism, though on his mother's side the *misnagid* or rationalist strain of Jewish belief was stronger. "My father," recalls Singer, "always used to say that if you don't believe in the *zaddikim* [the "wonder-rabbis" of Hasidism] to-day, tomorrow you won't believe in God. My mother would say, it's one thing to believe in God and another to believe in a man.... My mother's point of view is also my point of view."

Raised in a poor neighbourhood of Warsaw, on Krochmalna Street, Singer received a strictly traditional Jewish education. He studied in a rabbinical seminary which was "a kind of college" providing secular as well as religious studies. During his adolescence he spent three or four years in his grandfather's *shtetl*, Bilgoray, which would later show itself as a strong influence upon his work. Bilgoray

> was very old-fashioned. Not much has changed there in generations. In this town the traditions of hundreds of years ago still lived. There was no railroad nearby. It was stuck in the forest and it was pretty much as it must have been during the time of Chmielnicki.... I could have written *The Family Moskat* [a novel set in Warsaw] without having lived in Bilgoray, but I could never have written *Satan in Goray* [a novella dealing with 17th-century false messianism] or some of my short stories without having been there.

A decisive example was set by Singer's older brother, Israel Joshua, who began to write in his youth and became a leading Yiddish novelist, author of *The Brothers Ashkenazi* and *Yashe Kolb*. Throughout a distinguished career, I. J. Singer remained pretty much within the main lines of the Yiddish tradition, both as to moral and social attitudes, even though he was strongly influenced by contemporary Western writing, especially the kind of large-scale family novel popular in Europe at the turn of the century. Controlling the older Singer's fiction is the Jewish community, both as social framework and source of values; his style, fluent, relaxed and smooth, can be taken as a model for cultivated modern Yiddish. The older brother represents that which I. B. Singer learned from, struggled with, and then mostly left behind.

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In the Jewish world of Warsaw during the time Singer was growing up, a decision to become a secular writer meant a painful conflict with family and culture, a symbolic break from the paths of tradition:

> It was a great shock to my parents. They considered all the secular [Yiddish] writers to be heretics, all unbelievers—they really were too, most of them. To become a *literat* was to them almost as bad as becoming a *meshumed*, one who forsakes the faith. My father used to say that secular writers like Peretz were leading the Jews to heresy. He said everything they wrote was against God. Even though Peretz wrote in a religious vein, my father called his writing "sweetened poison," but poison nevertheless. And from his point of view he was right. Everybody who read such books sooner or later became a worldly man, and forsook the traditions. In my family, of course, my brother had gone first, and I went after him. For my parents, this was a tragedy.

In these early years of the century Warsaw was a lively if troubled city, the main centre of Jewish cultural life. The binding tradition of Yiddish literature had already been set by the pioneer generation of writers: Mendele Mocher Sforim, Sholom Aleichem, I. J. Peretz. It was a literature strongly devoted to problems of communal destiny and survival; characterised by a high, sometimes consuming ethical intent; closely tied to folk sources; drawing profoundly upon, even as it kept moving away from, religious tradition; resting upon a culture that might still be described as "organic" and certainly as coherent; and yet displaying many signs of the influence of European, especially Russian, writing. In Warsaw the major social and cultural movements of East European Jewish life found their most sophisticated versions: Yiddishism, the effort to create an autonomous secular culture based on the language of *galut*; Bundism, the organisation of a distinctively Jewish socialism, and Zionism, potentially of great importance but at this point still weak. Peretz's home became the gathering-place for young writers fresh from the provinces where the majority of Jews still lived; here, in this cosmopolitan haven, they could begin planning their novels and stories about the overwhelming memory of the *shtetl*. And the religious community, though now challenged from several directions and past the high point of its power, remained a major force within the world of the East European Jews.

Growing up in this feverish but immensely stimulating atmosphere, the younger Singer carved out a path of his own. He was not drawn to any of the Jewish movements: indeed, he has always been sceptical of the political messianism which, as a partial offshoot of the earlier religious messianism, runs through 20th-century Jewish life. He edged away from formal piety, yet remained close to the Jewish religious tradition, especially its more esoteric and cabbalistic elements. And while a master of the Yiddish language—he is second only to Sholom Aleichem in his command of its idiom—Singer was neither a programmatic Yiddishist nor notably at ease in the world of Yiddish culture, which has in the main been secular and rationalist in stress.

As a youth Singer began to read in forbidden tongues, discovering E. T. A. Hoffman and Edgar Allen Poe in the libraries of Warsaw. The exotic romanticism of these writers stirred his imagination rather more than did the work of most Yiddish writers, who were then in a realistic or even naturalistic phase, and with whose materials he felt all too familiar. An even stronger alien influence was that of Knut Hamsun, the Norwegian novelist, who enjoyed an international vogue during the years before World War II. Hamsun's novels, especially *Pan*, impressed upon the younger Singer the claims of the irrational in human existence, the power of the perverse within seemingly normal behaviour. Now, several decades later, it is hard to see much evidence of Hamsun in Singer's work: perhaps it was the kind of influence that does not leave a visible stamp but instead liberates a writer to go his own way.

A still more alien influence—for a young Jewish writer fresh from the *yeshiva*, an influence downright bizarre—was that curious body of writings known as spiritualism or "psychic research," which Singer somehow came upon in Warsaw and would continue to follow throughout his life. Could anything be more distant from the tradition of Yiddish literature or, for that matter, from the whole body of Jewish religious thought? Fortunately for his career as a writer, Singer has preserved a keen Jewish scepticism—in that department he is entirely traditional!—towards this branch of "knowledge," taking the sophisticated view that belief in the reality of spirits provides his fiction with a kind of compositional shorthand, a "spiritual stenography." As he remarks: "the demons and Satan represent to me, in a sense, the ways of the world. Instead of saying this is the way things happen, I will say, this is the way demons behave." Which is precisely what any cultivated sceptic, totally unconcerned with "psychic research," would also say.

In 1935, convinced that "it was inevitable after Hitler came to power that the Germans would invade Poland," Singer emigrated to the United States. He joined the staff of the Jewish daily

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Forward, a Yiddish newspaper, in which he printed serious fiction under his own name and a large quantity of journalism under the pen-name of Warshofsky. His first major work, the novella *Satan in Goray*, appeared in Yiddish in 1935. Since then he has written full-scale novels, one of which, *The Family Moskat*, was published in an English translation in 1949, as well as a number of short novels (in English: *The Magician of Lublin* and *The Slave*) and several collections of stories. His best work has been done in short forms, the novella and the story: exciting bursts and flares of the imagination.

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER is the only living Yiddish writer whose translated work has caught the imagination of a Western (the American) literary public. Though the settings of his stories are frequently strange, the contemporary reader—for whom the determination not to be shocked has become a point of honour—is likely to feel closer to Singer than to most other Yiddish writers. Offhand this may be surprising, for Singer's subjects are decidedly remote and exotic: in *Satan in Goray* the orgiastic consequences of the false messianism of 17th-century East European Jewish life; in *The Magician of Lublin* a portrait of a Jewish magician-Don Juan in late 19th-century Poland who exhausts himself in sensuality and ends as a penitent ascetic; in his stories a range of demonic, apocalyptic, and perversely sacred moments of *shtetl* life. Yet one feels that, unlike many of the Yiddish writers who treat more familiar and up-to-date subjects, Singer commands a distinctly "modern" sensibility.

Now this is partly true—in the sense that Singer has cut himself off from some of the traditional styles and assumptions of Yiddish writing. But it is also not true—in the sense that any effort to assimilate Singer to literary "modernism" without fully registering his involvement with Jewish faith and history is almost certain to distort his meanings.

Those meanings, one might as well admit, are often enigmatic and hard to come by. It must be a common experience among Singer's readers to find a quick pleasure in the caustic surfaces of his prose, the nervous tokens of his virtuosity, but then to acknowledge themselves baffled as to his point and purpose. That his fiction does have an insistent point and stringent purpose no one can doubt: Singer is too ruthlessly single-minded a writer to content himself with mere slices of representation or displays of the bizarre. His grotesquerie must be taken seriously, perhaps as a recoil from his perception of how irremediably and gratuitously ugly human life can be. He is a writer completely absorbed by the demands of his vision, a vision gnomic and compulsive but with moments of high exaltation; so that while reading his stories one feels as if one were overhearing bits and snatches of monologue, the impact of which is both notable and disturbing, but the meaning withheld.

Now these are precisely the qualities that the sophisticated reader, trained to docility before the exactions of "modernism," has come to

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

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applaud. Singer's stories work, or prey, upon the nerves. They leave one unsettled and anxious, the way a rationalist might feel if, waking at night in the woods, he suddenly found himself surrounded by a swarm of bats. Unlike most Yiddish fiction, Singer's stories neither round out the cycle of their intentions nor posit a coherent and ordered universe. They can be seen as paradigms of the arbitrariness, the grating injustice, at the heart of life. They offer instances of pointless suffering, dead-end exhaustion, inexplicable grace. And sometimes, as in Singer's masterpiece, *Gimpel the Fool*, they turn about, refusing to rest with the familiar discomforts of the problematic, and drive towards a prospect of salvation on the other side of despair, beyond soiling by error or will. This prospect does not depend on any belief in the comeliness or lawfulness of the universe; whether God is there or not, He is surely no protector:

> He had worked out his own religion [Singer writes about one of his characters]. There was a Creator, but He revealed himself to no one, gave no indications of what was permitted or forbidden.

Things happen, the probable bad and improbable good, both of them subject to the whim of the fortuitous; and the sacred fools like Gimpel, perhaps they alone, learn to roll with the punch, finding the value of their life in a total passivity and credulousness, a complete openness to suffering.

SINGER'S STORIES trace the characteristic motions of human destiny: a heavy climb upward ("The Old Man"), a rapid tumble downward ("The Fast"). Life forms a journeying to heaven and hell, mostly hell. What determines the direction a man will take? Sometimes the delicate manoeuvres between his will and desire, sometimes the heat of his vanity, sometimes the blessing of innocence. But more often than not, it is all a mystery which Singer chooses to present rather than explain. As his figures move upward and downward, aflame with the passion of their ineluctable destiny, they stop for a moment in the *shtetl* world. Singer is not content with the limitations of materiality, yet not at all indifferent to the charms and powers of the phenomenal universe. In his calculus of destiny, however, the world is a resting-place and what happens within it, even within the social enclave of the Jews, is not of lasting significance. Thick, substantial, and attractive as it comes to seem in Singer's representation, the world is finally but lure and appearance, a locale between heaven and hell, the shadow of larger possibilities.

In most Yiddish fiction the stress is quite different. There the central "character" is the collective destiny of the Jews in *galut* or exile; the central theme, the survival of a nation deprived of nationhood; the central ethic, the humane education of men stripped of worldly power yet sustained by the memory of chosenness and the promise of redemption. In Singer the norm of collective life is still present, but mostly in the background, as a tacit assumption; his major actions break away from the limits of the *shtetl* ethic, what has come to be known as *Yiddishkeit*, and then move either backward to the abandon of false messianism or forward to the doubt of modern sensibility. (There is an interesting exception, the story called "Short Friday," which in its stress upon family affection, ritual proprieties and collective faith, approaches rather closely the tones of traditional Yiddish fiction.)

The historical settings of East European Jewish life are richly presented in Singer's stories, often not as orderly sequences in time but as simultaneous perceptions jumbled together in the consciousness of figures for whom Abraham's sacrifice, Chmielnicki's pogroms, the rise and fall of Hasidism and the stirrings of the modern world are all felt with equal force. Yet Singer's ultimate concern is not with the collective experience of a chosen or martyred people but with the enigmas of personal fate. Given the slant of his vision, this leads him to place a heavy reliance upon the grotesque as a mode of narration, even as an avenue towards knowledge. But the grotesque carries with it a number of literary and moral dangers, not the least being the temptation for Singer to make it into an end in itself, which is to say, something facile and sensationalistic. In his second-rank stories he falls back a little too comfortably upon the devices of which he is absolute master, like a magician supremely confident his tricks will continue to work. But mainly the grotesque succeeds in Singer's stories because it comes to symbolise meaningful digressions from a cultural norm. An uninstructed reader may absorb Singer's grotesquerie somewhat too easily into the assumptions of modern literature; the reader who grasps the ambivalence of Singer's relation to Yiddish literature will see the grotesquerie as a cultural sign by means of which Singer defines himself against his own past.

IT IS HARDLY A SECRET that in the Yiddish literary world Singer is regarded with a certain suspicion. His powers of evocation, his resources as a stylist are acknowledged, yet many Yiddish literary persons, including the serious ones, seem uneasy about him. One reason is that

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"modernism"—which, as these people regard Singer, signifies a heavy stress upon sexuality, a concern for the irrational, expressionist distortions of character, and a seeming indifference to the humane ethic of Yiddishism—has never won so strong a hold in Jewish culture as it has in the cultures of most Western countries. For the Yiddish writers, "modernism" has been at best an adornment of manner upon a subject inescapably traditional.

The truly "modern" writer, however, is not quite trustworthy in relation to his culture. He is a shifty character by choice and need, unable to settle into that solid representativeness which would allow him to act as a cultural "spokesman." And to the extent that Singer does share in the modernist outlook he must be regarded with distrust by Yiddish readers brought up on such literary "spokesmen" as Peretz, Abraham Reisen, and H. Leivick. There is no lack of admiration among Yiddish readers for Singer's work: anyone with half an ear for the cadence and idiom of that marvellous language must respond to his prose. Still, it is a qualified, a troubled admiration. Singer's moral outlook, which seems to move with equal readiness towards the sensational and the ascetic, is hardly calculated to put Yiddish readers at their ease. So they continue to read him, with pleasure and anxiety.

And as it seems to me, they are not altogether wrong. Their admiring resistance to Singer's work may constitute a more attentive and serious response to his iconoclasm than the gleeful applause of those who read him in English translation and take him to be another writer of "black comedy," or heaven help us, a mid-20th-century "swinger."

The death of Satan was a tragedy for the imagination.

BY AND LARGE Singer has been fortunate in his translators, but no translation, not even Saul Bellow's magnificent rendering of *Gimpel the Fool*, could possibly suggest the full idiomatic richness and syntactical verve of Singer's Yiddish. Singer has left behind him the oratorical sententiousness to which Yiddish literature is prone, has abandoned its leisurely meandering pace, what might be called the *shtetl* rhythm, and has developed a style that is both swift and dense, nervous and thick. His sentences are short and abrupt; his rhythms coiled, intense, short-breathed. The impression his prose creates is not of a smooth and equable flow of language but rather a series of staccato advances and withdrawals, with sharp breaks between sentences. Singer seldom qualifies, wanders or circles back; his method is to keep

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darting forward, impression upon impression, through a series of jabbing declarative sentences. His prose is free of "literary" effects, a frequent weakness among Yiddish writers who wish to display their elegance and cultivation. And at the base of his prose is the oral idiom of Yiddish, seeded with ironic proverbs and apothegms ("Shoulders are from God, and burdens too"); but a speech that has been clipped, wrenched, syncopated.

What is most remarkable about Singer's prose is his ability to unite rich detail with fiercely compressed rhythms. For the translator this presents the almost insuperable problem of how to capture both his texture and his pace, his density of specification and his vibrating quickness. More often than not, even the most accomplished translator must choose between one effect and the other, if only because the enormous difficulty of rendering Yiddish idiom into another language forces him either to fill out or slow down Singer's sentences.

By its very nature, pace cannot be illustrated, but the richness of Singer's detail can, as in this characteristic passage from *The Old Man*:

> His son had died long before, and Reb Moshe Ber said the memorial prayer, *kaddish*, for him. Now alone in the apartment, he had to feed his stove with paper and wood shavings from garbage cans. In the ashes he baked rotten potatoes, which he carried in his scarf, and in an iron pot, he brewed chicory. He kept house, made his own candles by kneading bits of wax and suet around wicks, laundered his shirt beneath the kitchen faucet, and hung it to dry on a piece of string. He set the mousetraps each night and drowned the mice each morning. When he went out he never forgot to fasten the heavy padlock on the door. No one had to pay rent in Warsaw at that time.... The winter was difficult. There was no coal, and since several tiles were missing from the stove, the apartment was filled with thick black smoke each time the old man made a fire. A crust of blue ice and snow covered the window panes by November, making the rooms constantly dark or dusky. Overnight, the water on his night table froze in the pot. No matter how many clothes he piled over him in bed, he never felt warm; his feet remained stiff, and as soon as he began to doze, the entire pile of clothes would fall off, and he would have to climb out naked to make the bed once more. There was no kerosene; even matches were at a premium. Although he recited chapter upon chapter of the Psalms, he could not fall asleep. The wind, freely roaming about the rooms, banged the doors; even the mice left.

Or, in a more colourful vein, from *The Last Demon*:

> [the last demon] came here from Lublin. Tishevitz is a God-forsaken village: Adam didn't even stop to pee there. It's so small that a wagon goes through the town and the horse is in the market place just as the rear wheels reach the toll gate. There is mud in Tishevitz from Succoth until Tishe b'Ov. The goats of the town don't need to lift their beards to chew at the thatched roofs of the cottages. Hens roost in the middle of the streets. Birds build nests in the women's bonnets. In the tailor's synagogue a billy goat is the tenth in the quorum.

Or, grotesquely, from *Blood*:

> Frequently she sang for hours in Yiddish and in Polish. Her voice was harsh and cracked and she invented the songs as she went along, repeating meaningless phrases, uttering sounds that resembled the cackling of fowl, the grunting of pigs, the death-rattles of oxen.... At night in her dreams, phantoms tormented her; bulls gored her with their horns; pigs shoved their snouts into her face and bit her; roosters cut her flesh to ribbons with their spurs.

Or, tenderly, from *Gimpel the Fool*:

> I was an orphan. My grandfather who brought me up was already bent towards the grave. So they turned me over to a baker, and what a time they gave me there! Every woman or girl who came to bake a batch of noodles had to fool me at least once. "Gimpel, there's a fair in heaven; Gimpel, the rabbi gave birth to a calf in the seventh month; Gimpel, a cow flew over the roof and laid brass eggs." A student from the yeshiva came once to buy a roll, and he said, "You, Gimpel, while you stand here scraping with your baker's shovel the Messiah has come. The dead have arisen." "What do you mean?" I said. "I heard no one blowing the ram's horn." He said, "Are you deaf?" And all began to cry, "We heard it, we heard...."
>
> To tell the truth, I knew very well that nothing of the sort had happened, but all the same, as folks were talking, I threw on my wool vest and went out. Maybe something had happened. What did I stand to lose by looking? Well, what a cat music went up! And then I took a vow to believe nothing more. But that was no go either. They confused me so I didn't know the big end from the small.

Those of Singer's stories which speed downward into hell are often told by devils and imps, sometimes by Satan himself, marvelling at the vanity and paltriness of the human creature. Singer's arch-devil is a figure not so much of evil as of scepticism, a thoroughly modern voice to whose corrosive questions Singer imparts notable force in *A Tale of Two Liars*:

> Are you stupid enough to still believe in the power of prayer? Remember how the Jews prayed during the Black Plague, and nevertheless, how they perished like flies? And what about the thousands the Cossacks butchered? There was enough prayer, wasn't there, when Chmiel-

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nicki came? How were those prayers answered? Children were buried alive, chaste wives raped—and later their bellies ripped open and cats sewed inside. Why should God bother with your prayers? He neither hears nor sees. There is no judge. There is no judgment.

Using demons and imps as narrators proves to be a wonderful device for structural economy: they replace the need to enter the "inner life" of the characters, the whole plaguing business of the psychology of motives, for they serve as symbolic equivalents and co-ordinates to human conduct, what Singer calls a "spiritual stenography." In those stories, however, where Singer celebrates the power of human endurance, as in *The Little Shoemakers* and *The Old Man*, he uses third person narrative in the closest he comes to a "high style," so that the rhetorical elevation will help to create an effect of "epical" sweep.

Within his limits Singer is a genius. He has total command of his imagined world; he is original in his use both of traditional Jewish materials and his modernist attitude towards them; he provides a serious if enigmatic moral perspective; and he is a master of Yiddish prose. Yet there are times when Singer seems to be mired in his own originality, stories in which he displays a weakness for self-imitation that is disconcerting. Second-rate writers imitate others, first-rate writers themselves, and it is not always clear which is the more dangerous.

HAVING GONE this far, we must now turn again. If Singer's work can be grasped only on the assumption that he is crucially a "modernist" writer, one must add that in other ways he remains profoundly subject to the Jewish tradition. And if the Yiddish reader is inclined to slight the "modernist" side of his work, any other reader is likely to underestimate the traditional side.

One of the elements in the Jewish past that has most fascinated Singer is the recurrent tendency to break loose from the burden of the Mosaic law and, through the urging of will and ecstacy, declare an end to the *galut*. Historically, this has taken the form of a series of messianic movements, one led in the 17th century by Sabbatai Zevi and another in the 18th by Jacob Frank. The movement of Sabbatai Zevi appeared after the East European Jewish community had been shattered by the rebellion-pogrom of the Cossack chieftain, Chmielnicki. Many of the survivors, caught up in a strange ecstacy that derived all too clearly from their total desperation, began to summon apocalyptic fantasies and to indulge themselves in long-

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repressed religious emotions which, perversely, were stimulated by the pressures of Cabbalistic asceticism. As if in response to their yearnings, Sabbatai, a pretender rising in the Middle East, offered to release them of everything that rabbinical Judaism had confined or suppressed. He spoke for the tempting doctrine that faith is sufficient for salvation; for the wish to evade the limits of mundane life by forcing a religious transcendence; for the union of erotic with mystical appetites; for the lure of a demonism which the very hopelessness of the Jewish situation rendered plausible. In 1665–66 Sabbatianism came to orgiastic climax, whole communities, out of a conviction that the messiah was in sight, discarding the moral inhibitions of exile. Their hopes were soon brutally disappointed, for Sabbatai, persecuted by the Turkish Sultan, converted to Mohammedanism. His followers were thrown into confusion and despair, and a resurgent rabbinism again took control over Jewish life. Nevertheless, Sabbatianism continued to lead an underground existence among the East European Jews—even (I have been told by *shtetl* survivors) into the late 19th and early 20th century. It became a secret heretical cult celebrating Sabbatai as the apostate saviour who had been required to descend to the depths of the world to achieve the heights of salvation.

To this buried strand of Jewish experience Singer has been drawn in fascination and repulsion, portraying its manifestations with great vividness and its consequences with stern judgment. It is a kind of experience that rarely figures in traditional Yiddish writing yet is a significant aspect of the Jewish past. Bringing this material to contemporary readers, Singer writes *in* Yiddish but often quite apart from the Yiddish tradition; indeed, he is one of the few Yiddish writers whose relation to the Jewish past is not determined or screened by that body of values we call Yiddishism.

SINGER IS A WRITER of both the pre-Enlightenment and the post-Enlightenment: he would be equally at home with a congregation of medieval Jews and a gathering of 20th-century intellectuals, perhaps more so than at a meeting of the Yiddish PEN club. He has a strong sense of the mystical and antique, but also a cool awareness of psycho-analytic disenchantment. He has evaded both the religious pieties and the humane rationalism of 19th-century East European Judaism. He has skipped over the ideas of the historical epoch which gave rise to Yiddishism, for the truth is, I suppose, that Yiddish literature, in both its writers of acceptance and writers of scepticism, is thoroughly caught up with the Enlightenment. Singer is not. He shares very little in the collective sensibility or the *folkstimlichkeit* of the Yiddish masters; he does not unambiguously celebrate *dos kleine menshele* (the common man) as a paragon of goodness; he is impatient with the sensual deprivations implicit in the values of *edelkeit* (refinement, nobility); and above all he moves away from a central assumption of both Yiddish literature in particular and the 19th century in general, the assumption of an immanent fate or end in human existence (what in Yiddish is called *tachlis*).

But again qualifications are needed. It is one thing to decide to break from a tradition in which one has been raised, quite another to make the break completely. For Singer has his ties—slender, subterranean, but strong—with the very Yiddish writers from whom he has turned away.

At the centre of Yiddish fiction stands the archetypal figure of *dos kleine menshele*. It is he, long-suffering, persistent, lovingly ironic, whom the Yiddish writers celebrate. This poor but proud householder trying to maintain his status in the *shtetl* world even as he keeps sinking deeper and deeper into poverty, appeals to the Yiddish imagination far more than mighty figures like Aeneas or Ahab. And from this representative man of the *shtetl* there emerges a number of significant variations. One extreme variation is the ecstatic wanderer, hopeless in this world because profoundly committed to the other. An equally extreme variation is the wise or sainted fool who has given up the struggle for status and thereby acquired the wry perspective of an outsider. Standing somewhere between *dos kleine menshele* and these offshoots is Peretz's Bontsha Schweig, whose intolerable humbleness makes even the angels in heaven feel guilty and embarrassed. Singer's Gimpel is a literary grandson (perhaps only on one side) of Peretz's Bontsha; and as Gimpel, with the piling up of his foolishness, acquires a halo of comic sadness and comes to seem an epitome of pure spirit, one must keep balancing in one's mind the ways in which he is akin to, yet different from, Bontsha.

The Yiddish critic Shlomo Bickel has perceptively remarked that Singer's dominating principle is an "anti-Prometheanism," a disbelief in the efficacy of striving, defiance, and pride, a doubt as to the sufficiency of knowledge or even wisdom. This seems true, but only if one remembers that in a good many of Singer's fictions the central action does constitute a kind of Promethean ordeal or striving. Singer makes it abundantly clear that his characters have no choice: they must live out their desires, their orgiastic yearnings, their apocalyptic expectations. "Anti-Prometheanism" thus

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comes to rest upon a belief in the unavoidable recurrence of the Promethean urge.

WHAT FINALLY CONCERNS Singer most is the possibilities for life that remain after the exhaustion of human effort, after failure and despair have come and gone. Singer watches his stricken figures from a certain distance, with enigmatic intent and no great outpouring of sympathy, almost as if to say that before such collapse neither judgment nor sympathy matters very much. Yet in all of his fictions the Promethean effort recurs, obsessional, churning with new energy and delusion. In the knowledge that it will, that it must recur, there may also lie hidden a kind of pity, for that too we would expect, and learn to find, in the writer who created Gimpel.

Jane Austen's Place

Jane Austen: A Study of Her Artistic Development. By A. WALTON LITZ. *Chatto*, 30s.

MOST of the books about Jane Austen are either faithful-but-dull (Andrew Wright's) or vivacious-but-wanton (Marvin Mudrick's). Only one transcends such an antithesis: Mary Lascelles' *Jane Austen and Her Art*, twenty-six years old and still going strong. Going a great deal stronger, in fact, than A. Walton Litz's new study. Mr. Litz's line is eminently reasonable, as they say. He wishes to study Jane Austen's artistic development in a way that will synthesise the discoveries of recent critics (who have emphasised her subversive irony and her "regulated hatred") with the insights of an older generation. But like many such attempts to hold the ring, all it does is quieten down everything, dampen it, tame it. The referee is too afraid that somebody may get hurt. Equable, judicious, unexclamatory—all this is evidently to his credit, and it makes Mr. Litz's book very easy to read once: but impossible to read twice. Literary criticism that is unimpeachable is in the end nothing. It is hard to imagine how any reader of this book could find himself feeling strongly about Jane Austen: feeling indignant, wounded, exhilarated, shocked—or even feeling that any of her books is hugely to be preferred to the others. There is no need to believe that what we want is injustice, in order to have the sense that Mr. Litz's scrupulous balancing of the pro's and the con's drains away the life of the novels.

After a few hours of the critic's clear level words, never saying anything cryptic and never raising his voice, one could do with something passionate, something that conceded—even in its raucousness—that Jane Austen could touch a nerve as well as turn a phrase. Oh, the angry (and therefore in a sense complimentary) words of Kingsley Amis on *Mansfield Park*:

> What became of that Jane Austen (if she ever existed) who set out bravely to correct conventional notions of the desirable and virtuous? From being their critic (if ever she was) she became their slave. That is another way of saying that her judgment and her moral sense were corrupted. *Mansfield Park* is the witness of that corruption.

But Mr. Amis is not invited to Mr. Litz's seminar. Nor is H. W. Garrod:

> I refuse to call edifying in any intelligible sense works which accept as not only good, but natural, such worn and shabby institutions as simony, nepotism, and the marriage of convenience.

Nor is Charlotte Brontë invited, with her piercing questioning of Jane Austen:

> She does her business of delineating the surface of the lives of genteel English people curiously well. . . . What sees keenly, speaks aptly, moves flexibly, it suits her to study; but what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat of life

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and the sentient target of death—this Miss Austen ignores.

The strength of Miss Lascelles' book lay in its grappling with just such accusations. But Charlotte Brontë is not in Mr. Litz's index. True, at one moment it looks as though there will be a debate in which no holds are barred, and that is when D. H. Lawrence is allowed in, though not to utter his most coarsely inordinate accusation. Still, Lawrence is permitted to call her "mean" in her "sharp knowing in apartness." And then at once Mr. Litz bustles forward and separates the combatants: "After we have discounted Lawrence's masculine antagonism towards Jane Austen, and his characteristic identification of art with life, we are left with a penetrating statement of the essential themes in *Persuasion*." But is the "discounting" so easy an auditor's matter? Hasn't Lawrence raised a question which Mr. Litz is blandly deflecting? Mr. Litz goes in for what Cyril Connolly called "cultivating the chairmanities," so that literature is being protected as Eng. lit.

This is an academic book, not so much because of erudition (there are no new facts in it), as because of an omnipresent sense of the rules. The rules prevent any embarrassing impingement, and so does the style, which more than once speaks of "confrontation" but keeps it comfortable. Three times we hear of the conflict between "illusion and reality," for all the world as if anyone had ever managed to write a novel which is *not* about those ubiquitous entities. Not exactly jargon, because it is all lucid enough, but there is the worn coinage of, say, "epiphanies." Mr. Litz's determination not to be afraid of the obvious can verge on foolhardiness. Having spoken about the influences on her early work (the essay, Fanny Burney, Richardson, the novel of sensibility), he continues: "Most of these influences are fairly obvious, and we shall return to them in succeeding chapters as we trace the evolution of Jane Austen's narrative techniques." For a moment it seemed that a "not" must have been omitted. But no, Mr. Litz means that they are fairly obvious and that he is going to return to them. Yes—oh dear, yes —Mr. Litz tells us that the novel tells a story. It is the same with this sequence:

> In *Northanger Abbey* Jane Austen explored a problem to which she would return again and again, the problem of accommodating reason and feeling, or regulating sympathy without destroying it. Stated in the abstract, the leading themes of *Northanger Abbey* sound—

—sound thin, dull, schematic? Not a bit of it: "...sound as rich and subtle as those of Jane Austen's later works." Not to me they don't—

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they sound vacuously commonplace. And when Mr. Litz uses the word "explored," Jane Austen's exploration sounds about as audacious as a bus-ride. More than once she is awarded a kind of praise which she neither asks nor deserves and which therefore can have no effect but to disparage her. "*Northanger Abbey* was a pioneer criticism of the Gothic form, once more demonstrating Jane Austen's extraordinary grasp of current literary trends and opinions. She was always among the first to recognise the decay of a literary form...." But Mr. Litz has only that minute told us that *Northanger Abbey* was begun in 1798, and that in 1797 there had begun "a series of burlesques and satires" on the Gothic. And he goes on to quote a Recipe for "a good mixture of shudders and fright" which belongs to 1797.

But the central debility of Mr. Litz's book lies in its refusal to consider the question of Jane Austen's subject-matter. There is now a snug pretence that the whole question has been settled, and that cogent arguments have dealt once and for all with the old-fashioned critics who believed that Jane Austen did, marvellously, everything that could be done with her chosen subject-matter but was manifestly circumscribed in her achievement by that subject-matter. But where are these cogent arguments? It is possible to be altogether grateful for what Jane Austen did without supposing that she did nearly as much as Dickens or George Eliot. Once upon a time it used to be thought that only certain subjects were suitable for literature, and this delusion had the unfortunate consequence of making people overrate the grandiose and underrate everything else. But it is vital to see that the argument about Jane Austen is of quite a different kind. What is in question is not whether her subject-matter can be that of successful literature, but whether some subjects are or are not of greater intrinsic importance than others. For Hazlitt it was evident that *King Lear* was "the best of all Shakespeare's plays" because "The passion which he has taken as his subject is that which strikes its root deepest into the human heart." To believe, as we all now rightly do, that any subject can precipitate literature, is not at all the same as believing that any subject can precipitate literature equally profound, weighty, or central to human life. Howard Babb (in his book on Jane Austen's dialogue) has said that Miss Lascelles "tends to settle for an uneasy truce" on this question, but it is precisely her refusal to wave the magic academic wand that gives her study its strength.

With his second sentence, Mr. Litz bumps into the problem: "The success of modern criticism in analysing works of fiction by methods formerly associated with the study of lyric poetry has made the traditional objections to Jane Austen's limited subject-matter seem almost irrelevant." But, hurrying on like the White Rabbit ("Oh! *Won't* she be savage if I've kept her waiting!"), Mr. Litz thenceforth treats "almost irrelevant" as if it meant "altogether irrelevant." He simply writes as if the matter were closed. "The fact is that Jane Austen's world was extremely limited, at least as far as subject-matter was concerned, and . . ." But Jane Austen herself praised novels as displaying not only "the greatest powers of the mind" but also "the most thorough knowledge of human nature," and what precisely does it mean to claim that the genteel world of "3 or 4 Families in a Country Village" permits as *thorough* a knowledge of human nature as does the world of Dickens or George Eliot? Mr. Litz quotes, very aptly, Henry James' insistence that the novel is "a living thing, all one and continuous. ... What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident, but the illustration of character?" But the corollary is that if the world which you describe lacks a great many kinds of incident, then it is likely to lack a great many ways of illustrating character. Mr. Litz twice tells us that Jane Austen was interested in "the effects produced on the human mind by a series of events" rather than in "those events themselves." But is this an antithesis which we ever feel impelled to make in the work of the very greatest writers? His praise of *Pride and Prejudice* as bearing the "hallmark of 'classic' art" is altogether justified, though he nowhere concedes that to use such a term implies that Jane Austen does not join the few very great writers in English who transcend any such term.

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Royal Avant-Garde

Private View. By Bryan Robertson, John Russell, Lord Snowdon. *Nelson, £7 7s.*

Every generation or so a new candidate is proposed for the title of "the greatest English painter since Constable (or Turner)." At somewhat longer intervals the wider claim is made that London at last rivals Paris as a centre of creative art. While we cheerfully laugh at foreigners who judge our literature exclusively on the basis of Shakespeare, Byron, Wilde, and Galsworthy, we scan American and Continental writers anxiously for any kind word they have to say of our painting and sculpture.

Social insecurity does not provide the best foundation for making serious reappraisals, and many of its disadvantages are felt in this luxurious new production with a text by John Russell (surely not, one wonders doubtfully, the author of the same name who recently wrote an excellent book on Seurat) and Bryan Robertson, the enterprising and energetic director of the Whitechapel Art Gallery. The photographs are by Lord Snowdon, and though they vary greatly in their imaginative interpretation of the sitters they form by far the most interesting and valuable section of the book. Though we are told that Lord Snowdon "never tries to impose his own personality on his subject," the impression clearly emerges that he has intended to convey a state of exhilarating and productive vitality, and his typical artist is as immediately recognisable as the frock-coated academician of the last century: highly energetic and extravert, casually rather than eccentrically dressed, often rocking with laughter and, above all, deeply devoted to his children who crawl over his sculptures, clamber on to his back or tug at his beard. Some of these portraits show a most subtle insight into character and tell us more about the painters they represent than many paragraphs of critical appraisal (let alone the critical appraisal to be found in this volume), and the average of two or three well-reproduced works for each artist adds up to a useful anthology of present-day trends. Connoisseurs, critics, and dealers are also shown: there are a few gimmicks—Mr. David Sylvester, for instance, looking like Michel Simon stealing a Soutine in a film directed by René Clair—but some of these illustrations achieve a standard of perception that will remain of permanent value to the historian. And one or two are classics, which will surely be reproduced in anthologies as among the really memorable images of these years: notably that of Mrs. Helen Lessore seated on a bed in the now closed Beaux-Arts Gallery, which is not only of outstanding beauty in itself, but also profoundly evocative of the type of pictures that were to be found on the walls of that admirable institution.

There would, perhaps, be more point in stressing the great merits of most of these photographs, were they not immediately apparent, and had not Messrs. Robertson and Russell anticipated the critic by praising in their Foreword the "inquisitive and exceptionally tenacious intelligence of Snowdon," who is, incidentally, named on the title page as an equal partner with them in the enterprise. The practice of collaborators writing about each other in this way is a strange and new one, but those who really relish Mr. Bryan Robertson's style when coming to grips with royalty and its circles should be referred as well to his Profile of Princess Margaret in *The Spectator* of 5 November 1965. The fact that this must surely have been as embarrassing to the sitter as to those who have read it (when next in Kensington Palace Mr. Robertson should study Lord Snowdon's "inquisitive and exceptionally tenacious intelligence" in the art of portraiture) is not relevant; but the article is mentioned here for one phrase which is of some importance in gauging the significance of the book under review. "Princess Margaret and her husband," he writes, "have made between them the first real contact between the royal family and what might be considered the *avant-garde* art of our day and its practitioners." The significance of this comment extends far beyond *Private View* and affects the whole nature of mid-20th-century art.

The phrase *"avant-garde"* was first used in its present sense in the 1880s. Though it was never defined, its implications were that certain strands of contemporary art lay so far ahead of general public taste that they could not expect to win respectability or widespread support, at least for a number of years. Sometimes indeed, as in the case of the Futurists, artists went out of their way to antagonise potential admirers in those sections of society which they themselves despised. Such an extreme position was rare, but none the less in their general attitude the *avant-garde* artists of the 1880s and later differed from all their predecessors, even those, such as the Romantics and the Impressionists, who had at first been greeted with hostility but who had always expected (as well as hoped for) immediate recognition. This new conception of art led to, as it was the result of, many developments: an increasing experimentation uninhibited now by any fears of offending public taste; a new method of displaying work based on the principle of the small private dealer rather

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Commentary

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Marcus Cunliffe
Encounter, August 1965

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than the large-scale institutional exhibition; and a new type of criticism.

This criticism was motivated by an attempt to interpret what the artist was trying to do and to evaluate the result in the light of the critic's own temperament rather than to judge his achievement according to a loosely applied but universally accepted standard—such as truth to nature or adherence to classical principles. For the first time, in fact, the critic was having to follow in the wake of the artist. A good thing, no doubt, but with some sad consequences: the cultivated public, which no longer had any means of verifying excellence, now set up strange and formidably powerful gods in place of the relaxed principles which had once served so well. However, one obstacle stood in the way of total disintegration: the critic's commitment to his own deeply held principles and the extent to which they were shared by others. When an artist's work conflicted with these, even the most generous of critics, such as Gustave Geffroy, was bound to be unfair—but that unfairness was the essential price he had to pay for the quality of his appreciation elsewhere. As far back as 1846 Baudelaire had said that ideal criticism should be *"partiale, passionnée, politique,"* but the application of this theory did not become general until later in the century. Thereafter there can be little doubt that sympathy of taste between artist and critic led to a golden age in the writing about contemporary art, and that the art itself of *avant-garde* groups or individuals was of a quality that has only rarely been surpassed. Painters and sculptors responded to the stimulus of "the happy few" as imaginatively as they had once done to commissions from the Church, the Court, or municipal bodies. None the less, its short history shows that the concept of an *avant-garde* has by no means always been necessary for the production of great and revolutionary art: indeed in many ways it proved recklessly destructive of talent, and could it be replaced by sympathetic and discriminating public attention, its passing should be positively welcomed.

Does the appearance of this glossy and expensive book issued under the auspices, as it were, of Kensington Palace and Lord Thomson of Fleet mark a new reconciliation between the best of modern art and *bien pensant* society? On this reader the effect is very different. What in fact is here celebrated is a honeymoon with the notion of an *avant-garde* as such, and the danger is that it will become devitalised by the passion of such sumptuous embraces. It is already fashionable to-day to like new art more because it is new than be-

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cause it is art. Never have the Red Queen's much quoted words been more applicable: "Here, you see, it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that...." This book, however serious its intentions and however valuable some of its insights, will surely compel the artist to run still faster, if that is possible: and a burst blood vessel can be as dangerous to his art, if not to himself, as starvation in a garret.

FASHION AND ART have always been closely connected, and their combination in this book and the publicity that surrounded it need arouse no cries of alarmed puritanism. But from two authors who are so well placed we do have the right to expect an attempt at discrimination as well as enthusiasm. We do not get it. The principle adopted is one of *tout pardonner, c'est tout comprendre*. The short critical appraisals are guided neither by general principles nor by an independent temperament that is *"partiale, politique, passionée."* Selection, of course, necessarily implies judgment, and one assumes that a few striking omissions have been made with this in mind. It is also true that the text is the work of two authors, and that we can sometimes read between the lines to discover an occasional difference of emphasis between them. But the over-all effect is one of bland and impersonal approval for everyone who is mentioned without the compensating advantages of serious documentation which would give the book value as a historical source. One after another, artists, world-famous and scarcely known, good, bad, and indifferent, similar and pursuing wholly different ends, are brought forward for our inspection with benevolent impartiality. It is not just that by the law of averages the situation simply *cannot* be as exciting as it is here assumed to be—can anyone think of 81 talented artists at work in one country even in 1510 or 1880? This need not matter, for as Mr. Russell rightly says "never to go overboard for an unknown artist is the sign of bad character in a critic." Why the book ultimately presents an unsatisfactory (and surely unrecognisable) picture of the art world is that it brings to light none of the conflicts which must be inherent in any community which is as vital as London is here claimed to be—conflicts not on the level of gossip, but of real moral and aesthetic principles.

From such deadening complacency one turns back to the illustrations to be stimulated, as one should be, to emotions ranging from enthusiasm to old-style, Bournemouth indignation—but also to be assailed by further doubts. For has not much art now reached a stage where criticism *can* only consist in the simple assertion of preferences? The difficulties of conveying through one medium the intrinsic beauties and emotions aroused by another have always been notoriously difficult, and art criticism has at best been a fumbling and inadequate tool capable of exploring and evaluating only a fraction of what has faced it. This it did in the past by seizing principally on those aspects of a painting or sculpture which related to experiences potentially familiar to the spectator through life or literature. Artists themselves are often still inspired by the same emotions or experiences, but they now tend to express them in terms which can no longer be adequately communicated by language, despite Mr. Russell's claim that every painting by Miss Riley (who "looks physically as if one could pick her up with the nearest pair of tongs") "is about a given human situation." The total inadequacy of many—though not all—the critical judgments expressed in this book may well lie not so much in any failings of the authors but in the nature of the art itself, which has outstripped the possibilities of language in evaluating it. Instead we have to do with stumbling descriptions. It is hard to be sure whether this matters or not. Certainly we can hear echoing down the ages the protests of artists at the futilities of criticism: it will be of real interest to see whether the disappearance of what has hitherto been meant by the word will improve the situation or not. Here is one purpose at least that will be served by the publication of this book.

Francis Haskell

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PRESS

The Shadow of the Law

THE RIGHT to personal liberty as enjoyed in a mature democracy has of course many facets. Looked at from one or another aspect it may indeed seem to be in conflict with itself. This is especially so in the case of freedom of expression, of which the liberty of the press is an example, and which is still as much debated as when Milton wrote the *Areopagitica*. That in a free society the press should be free is something to which we in this country are at least willing to pay lip service although in a number of countries claiming to be free, it is by no means any longer axiomatic. But how free? Absolute freedom means absolute anarchy, and one freedom is tolerable only to the extent that it does not unreasonably curtail another. It is in this sort of context that there has in recent years been much discussion, on the one hand, of the right of the press to disclose and publish—and, on the other, of the right of the individual to privacy. The press has complained that its freedom has become severely curtailed. Others have said that its "intrusion into private life" and its other abuses necessitate that it should be curtailed still more.

The notion of a legal right to privacy is one which has been recognised both in the law of the United States and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But to recognise the right and to give sensible effect to it are two very different matters. In the U.S.A., the Courts have jurisdiction to give a remedy in damages in the case of

> an unwarranted ... publicising of one's private affairs with which the public has no legitimate concern or the wrongful intrusion into one's private activities in such a manner as to outrage or cause mental suffering shame or humiliation to a person of ordinary sensibilities.

But what is an "unwarranted" publicising? And in what private affairs has the public no "legitimate interest"? And what indeed, in these strange days, is "ordinary sensibility"? The existence of these necessary qualifications show how uncertain the administration of any such jurisdiction must become. Similarly, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it is provided that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home, or correspondence, nor to attack upon his honour or reputation...." But what is and what is not "arbitrary"?

ENGLISH LAW HAS NEVER gone so far as this, although it is not certain that in an extreme case the House of Lords might not hold that the principles of the Common Law—"broadening down from precedent to precedent"—did indeed provide some remedy. In two cases involving august personages, our Courts in the 19th century indicated that a right of privacy might exist. When George III was ill, Lord Eldon (putting a hypothetical case) thought that if his physician had made notes of conversations and had then attempted to publish them, a Court might stop him. This was in the days when the exposure of abdominal operation scars by top people was an unusual occurrence. Later, a publisher actually did attempt to publish copies of a number of etchings which Prince Albert and Queen Victoria had made of events in their family life and of which he had managed somehow to get hold. In 1848 the Courts granted an injunction to prevent this, expressly saying that what was proposed was an intrusion into the rights of privacy. A similar situation might possibly have arisen in the recent case where there was a threat to publish school essays written by Prince Charles, but a simpler remedy existed. The English law, like God, is—as of course everybody knows—no respecter of persons. Still, it would be a bold and wealthy litigant who sought to persuade the House of Lords to accord to him in the very different circumstances of today the protection made available to the Royal Family over a hundred years ago.

Because of this uncertainty in the Common Law, proposals have from time to time been made for some statutory protection. But these have so far failed to secure enactment for two main reasons. Of these the most troublesome is, of course, the difficulty of definition. What is an unwarrantable invasion of privacy? In pre-

THE RT. HON. LORD SHAWCROSS, *Q.C., LL.D., was Attorney-General in the Labour Government of 1945-51 and Chief Prosecutor for the United Kingdom at the Nuremberg Trials. He was a Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague, and is Chairman of* JUSTICE *(British Branch of the International Commission of Jurists). In 1962 he was Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Press.*

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cisely what matters has the public no reasonable or legitimate interest? No doubt there are obvious cases: one can easily recognise the elephant when one sees it in spite of the difficulty of defining its appearance. But in any statutory attempt to protect privacy, definition of what was protected would be all important. Some discretion could no doubt be left to the Courts, but the greater the vagueness or generality of any definition the greater the risk that the law might be abused so as to curtail legitimate publicity and to support the tendency to *secrecy* which too often seems to characterise those concerned with the conduct of affairs affecting the public interest.

THE OTHER reason lies in the changing manners of society. The development of all sorts of means of mass communication undreamt of in the 19th century: television (not to mention *Telstar*), and the great increase in the circulation of popular newspapers had made us all accustomed to (and some of us to seek) a much greater degree of publicity in regard to our personal affairs than would have been thought seemly less than half a century ago. When I first became interested in candidatures for Parliament, it was thought not only irrelevant but slightly bad form to publish photographs of one's wife and children in one's election address. Now a candidate who does not fully publicise and exploit his cosy family life (if he has any pretence at one) is thought a little queer. Many a marriage has been patched up, or at least a divorce postponed, until the result of an election was known. Coupled with all this is the fact that the increasing complexity of modern societies has led both to a vast increase in the number of people engaged in one form or another of public life, political, social or industrial, and because of the greater impact of their activities upon the lives of the ordinary people, to a greater interest on the part of the general public in how these people conduct themselves. The world is a much less private place than it used to be. And those who engage in public life, whether it be in politics or in leading positions in industry or the professions, are a legitimate matter of interest to the public at large. "Public men are public property." This is the price to be paid.

It may be added that the vast majority of those concerned are only too willing to pay it. It was, I think, the late Miss Mae West, who coined the phrase that "it is better to be looked over than to be overlooked" and most of those in public life would prefer to receive a little too much attention from the newspapers than to be ignored by them. Almost without exception, all newspapers have gossip columns, however disguised; and these are amongst the most widely read features of modern journalism.

Should Privacy Be Defined?

BUT THIS is by no means to say that there is no right to privacy or that newspapers do not sometimes commit unpardonable intrusions upon it. Whilst the public has "a right to know and to be informed" about much in the life of public men and women, they in their turn are entitled to privacy in their purely family and private affairs—so long as these are not a matter of public concern. It may, I think, be a matter of public concern if, for example, some politician is about to be divorced or possibly if he is conducting some undesirable affair, for the moral behaviour of men and women in public life may provide an example, as well as a guide to their character, which is a proper subject of public interest. On the contrary, it may be merely a matter of impertinent curiosity to canvass whether a particular public figure is still sharing the same bedroom as his wife or agrees with his daughter's current selection of boy friends. These are lines which it is difficult to draw and the question is whether the public interest in securing the reasonable protection of privacy on the one hand and, on the other, in maintaining reasonable freedom for the press to publicise matters of public concern, necessitates an attempt to define the matter by statute. In my view, it does not.

In recent years there has been a marked improvement in the way in which newspapers have handled these matters. The Press Council, reconstituted with lay members under Lord Devlin as its distinguished Chairman, has shown itself capable and courageous in dealing with such abuses as have arisen. The number of complaints to the Press Council has been very small in relation to the number of journalists in the country and the published number of what are called "human interest stories." The number appears to be decreasing. Some years ago a very strong committee on the Law of Defamation, presided over by the late Lord Porter, reported that:

> The complaint which is summarised in the expression "invasion of privacy" consists in the alleged practice on the part of representatives of the press of which evidence was tendered to us of intruding upon those who have suffered bereavement or cross-questioning those who are related to or otherwise incidentally connected with persons who have committed crimes or attained notoriety and of publishing in sensational form

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details of the private lives and affairs of such persons....

In so far as the complaint relates to the publication of details of the private lives and affairs of persons who have no desire for such publicity, the matter so published, however offensive to good taste, is not normally defamatory. If it is, and is also untrue, it is actionable under the existing law....

We think there are great difficulties in formulating an extended definition of criminal or civil libel which, whilst effective to restrain improper invasion of privacy would not interfere with the due reporting of matters which are of public interest. It appears to us, however, that the difficulties which confront this Committee should not form an obstacle to action by the press itself or prevent it from dealing with the problem as one of external discipline.

Experience during the years which have since passed has confirmed the correctness of this conclusion.

Is THERE, on the other hand, a case for the amendment of any of the laws which, the newspapers complain, are unduly fettering their freedom of expression?

Contrary to the position in many other countries, there is in the United Kingdom no special or basic law protecting "the freedom of the press." That freedom is simply one of the many facets of the law relating to personal liberty. Broadly speaking, any individual is entitled to exercise freedom of expression whether in speech or in writing provided that in so doing he does not infringe the rights of others. In the Roman Law—although our own does not derive from that—the principle was well expressed in the maxim, *Sic utere tuo ut alienum non lædas* ("Make use of your own property in such a manner as not to injure that of another"). John Stuart Mill put it more tersely in saying that the limitation on liberty is not to become a nuisance to other people. Again, broadly speaking, although there are some procedural alleviations, a newspaper is in no better a position than a private individual. One of the rights which a private individual, including a newspaper editor, possesses is that of not having false statements made about him to his detriment. But here again the problem is one of balance. The general public interest would not be served if newspapers were able with impunity to besmirch the reputation of citizens whether in private or in public life. There is already so much cynicism and so-called satire in modern life, destroying accepted standards and putting nothing in their place, that no one would really want to allow complete licence in the matter. Nor does the press ask for this.

But it is equally in the public interest that the press should not be unduly inhibited in probing into and investigating matters of public concern and commenting fearlessly upon them. Many matters of public scandal have rightly been brought to light in this way. The function of the law is to maintain a proper balance between these two considerations. The press complain that in recent years that balance has become tilted unfairly against them. They have asserted, too, that the law relating to contempt of court has often prevented them reporting or commenting freely upon judicial proceedings although the public interest in their view required such reporting or comment. The Official Secrets Acts, they say, are often used not to prevent the disclosure of information which would be prejudicial to the interest or safety of the State but to "cover up" mistakes and maladministration in the public service. Mr. Cecil King, head of a most important group of popular newspapers, usefully and powerfully called attention to the way in which these matters were, as he said, "preventing the press discharging its proper functions in modern society...."

Gossip, Libel, Privilege

IT WAS in these circumstances that the Law Reform Society called JUSTICE—which had already performed some public service by promoting changes in the law relating to contempt of court, and which (by its pioneering study through the Committee under Sir John Whyatt) alerted the public to the need and paved the way for the establishment of an "Ombudsman" system—decided to set up a working party to investigate the law in relation to the press. The working party was composed of experienced lawyers and journalists. It heard a great deal of evidence from newspaper proprietors, editors, and others interested in the subject and in June of last year it published its report. I have no doubt that this report will in due course lead to some alteration and amelioration of the law although, in the present state of the Government programme, legislation will have to be promoted by a private Member.

One of the first matters to be examined in considering the law affecting the freedom of the press is, of course, the substantive law of Libel. In 1952 as a result of a private Member's Bill introduced by Mr. Harold Lever, M.P., a barrister who has closely interested himself in the matter, the law was significantly and beneficially amended in a number of respects. In the present

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state of public opinion and in the face of the hostility of some politicians towards the press, it must be conceded that further major alterations in the substantive law may hardly be a matter of practical politics. But the JUSTICE working party did not consider that, save in one important respect, any major alteration in the substantive law was called for. The proposal they did make is, however, one of great interest and importance, however controversial it may turn out to be.

It arises from the conviction that one of the functions, and indeed one of the duties of a free press in a free society is to disclose fearlessly and without favour that which it is in the public interest should be known. The English law of libel has always recognised that there may be certain relationships in which there is a duty to disclose and a corresponding right or duty to know. What these relationships are has never been exhaustively defined, nor could they be. The relationships in which such a duty and associated right may arise are in fact of infinite variety. Sometimes they may be of a public character: for instance, a statement by the clerk of a public authority to a member of his Council about some matter concerning a third party, perhaps about the morals of a Council tenant, or as to a speculative builder applying for some planning consent. Sometimes they are of a private nature: as, for example, a statement by a member or friend of the family concerning the conduct of some other member of it. And sometimes they are of a kind which is semi-public: as in the case of an ex-employer who answers a request for a reference for a servant he once employed. In all these cases the law recognises that the relationship is not one of "mere gossipers spreading idle tales" but that there is a social or moral interest both in communicating what is said and in hearing it.

The Courts, accordingly, accept that there is both a duty to communicate and a right to know. If what is thus communicated is honestly believed to be true, and is passed on in a sense of duty and without malice, no action will lie—even if, in the event, it turns out to have been quite untrue and perhaps to have caused real damage. This is the defence known as *qualified privilege*. The qualification distinguishes the defence from that of the absolute privilege which attaches, for instance, to things said or written in the course of Parliamentary proceedings; what was published must have been published in good faith believing it to be true. The Member of Parliament who, in Parliament, with malicious intent publishes something which he knows to be false or as to the truth of which he is recklessly careless, is absolutely protected and the privilege is from time to time abused.

No ONE WOULD SUGGEST that this absolute privilege should be extended in the slightest degree. There are some who consider that already it goes too far. But it seems strange that the existing law, while it allows the right of the press to comment fairly on matters of public interest provided the facts are stated with complete accuracy, does not recognise that the press has any duty to the public to comment, still less to disclose. In the opinion of the JUSTICE working party there is no doubt that one of the primary duties of a free press in a free society is indeed that of "disclosure in the public interest." The business of Government, of public professional and commercial life, would be in danger and politics would become utterly corrupted were it not for the fact that ordinary people do consider that the press has this responsibility and, moreover, expect the press to discharge it. Unfortunately, newspapers are gravely inhibited in this necessary task by the fact that if, in the event, it turns out to be impossible to establish by legally admissible evidence the accuracy of what has been alleged—however carefully they may have enquired into the matter in the first instance and with whatever honesty and good faith the publication was made—they may be mulcted in heavy if not extortionate damages. The defence of "qualified privilege" which recognises the duty to communicate within a limited circle or in special relationships has not hitherto, in practice, been available to the newspapers in respect of communications to all their readers.

An American Example

DOES this position serve the public interest? The JUSTICE Report says flatly that it does not. In its view the law should be altered so as to state clearly by statute that a defence of "qualified privilege" would be available to newspapers in respect of the publication of matters of public concern or interest made in good faith and without malice and based upon evidence which might reasonably have been believed to be true, provided that the newspaper concerned has on request published a reasonable letter or statement by way of explanation or contradiction and has withdrawn and apologised for anything shown to be inaccurate.

It may be said that this would expose innocent citizens to the risk that newspapers might defame them with impunity—and that the damage done by a newspaper publication is far in excess of any which might result from publication within the more limited circles in which the

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defence of qualified privilege already exists. This argument is, I think, met by the special requirement which would be imposed upon newspapers (but which does not arise in the existing cases of qualified privilege) of having to publish corrections and apologies where statements made turned out to have been inaccurate. It is no doubt true that the existing defences of absolute and of qualified privilege, perhaps especially the former, do occasionally result in injustice to whomever may have been falsely defamed. The policy of the law, and indeed of Parliament, has been to consider this evil outweighed by the public advantage secured by the liberty to speak fearlessly on privileged occasions. It is certainly my view that if the press is properly to discharge its duty of disclosure in the public interest, and as the public expect, this risk of occasional injustice, largely mitigated as it would be by the obligation to retract and apologise, is one which it is in the interest of the public at large to accept. This is one of those cases where the general advantage far outweighs the occasional particular inconvenience.[1]

Is public opinion prepared for such a change in the law? This is more doubtful. But it may be of interest to observe that in the United States the Supreme Court has held that a qualified privilege does exist in the case where defamatory statements have been made about persons in public positions. It is possible that the privilege may extend to cases where public matters are involved. It is perhaps worth referring to the recent case of *The New York Times* v. *Sullivan* in a little detail.

The plaintiff in that case was one of three commissioners who are periodically elected in the city of Montgomery, Alabama, with some responsibility for the supervision of the Police Department and other Departments of the City Authority. The *New York Times* published an advertisement by "THE COMMITTEE TO DEFEND MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN THE SOUTH," in the course of which criticisms were made (not always accurately) against the conduct of the Police in Montgomery in a way which, the plaintiff said, suggested that he, in his capacity as Commissioner, had been a party to using intimidation and violence. In the State Courts the plaintiff succeeded and the jury awarded him half a million dollars by way of damages. In the opinion of the Supreme Court this involved a violation of the constitutional amendments protecting freedom of speech. In referring to an earlier decision the Court said:

> But the Court was careful to note that it "retains and exercises authority to nullify action which encroaches on freedom of utterance under the guise of punishing libel"; for "public men, are, as it were, public property," and "discussion cannot be denied and the right, as well as the duty, of criticism must not be stifled" ... libel can claim no talismanic immunity from constitutional limitations. It must be measured by standards that satisfy the First Amendment.

The opinion continued:

> Authoritative interpretations of the First Amendment guarantees have consistently refused to recognise an exception for any test of truth—whether administered by judges, juries or administrative officials—and especially one that puts the burden of proving truth on the speaker. The constitutional protection does not turn upon "the truth, popularity, or social utility of the ideas and beliefs which are offered." As Madison said, "Some degree of abuse is inseparable from the proper use of every thing; and in no instance is this more true than in that of the press."

In a previous decision, *Cantwell* v. *Connecticut*, the Court had declared:

> In the realm of religious faith, and in that of political belief, sharp differences arise. In both fields the tenets of one man may seem the rankest error to his neighbour. To persuade others to his own point of view, the pleader, as we know, at times, resorts to exaggeration, to vilification of men who have been, or are, prominent in church or state, and even to false statement. But the people of this nation have ordained in the light of history, that in spite of the probability of excesses and abuses, these liberties are, in the long view, essential to enlightened opinion and right conduct on the part of the citizens of a democracy.

The Court, in the *Times* case, continued:

> That erroneous statement is inevitable in free debate, and that it must be protected if the freedoms of expression are to have the "breathing space" that they "need ... to survive," was also recognised by the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in *Sweeney* v. *Patterson*. Judge Edgerton spoke for a unanimous court which affirmed the dismissal of a Congressman's libel suit based upon a newspaper article charging him with anti-Semitism in opposing a judicial appointment. He said:
>
> "Cases which impose liability for erroneous reports of the political conduct of officials re-

[1] Moreover, the Press would not of course be judge in its own cause. It would remain for the Courts to decide whether the matter published was one in which there was a public interest and whether the newspaper concerned had made proper enquiries and in fact had reasonable grounds to believe and did believe that which it had published.

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> flect the obsolete doctrine that the governed must not criticise their governors.... The interest of the public here outweighs the interest of appellant or any other individual. The protection of the public requires not merely discussion, but information. Political conduct and views which some respectable people approve, and others condemn, are constantly imputed to Congressmen. Errors of fact, particularly in regard to a man's mental states and processes, are inevitable.... Whatever is added to the field of libel is taken from the field of free debate."

Injury to official reputation affords no more warrant for repressing speech that would otherwise be free than does factual error.

And here the Supreme Court cited the famous passage from Mill's *On Liberty*:

> ...to argue sophistically, to suppress facts or arguments, to misstate the elements of the case, or misrepresent the opposite opinion... all this, even to the most aggravated degree, is so continually done in perfect good faith, by persons who are not considered, and in many other respects may not deserve to be considered, ignorant or incompetent, that it is rarely possible, on adequate grounds, conscientiously to stamp the misrepresentation as morally culpable; and still less could law presume to interfere with this kind of controversial misconduct.

The Court stressed what is particularly in point in Britain, having regard to the economic problems which beset our press, quite apart from the fear of extortionate damages:

> Whether or not a newspaper can survive a succession of such judgments, the pall of fear and timidity imposed upon those who would give voice to public criticism is an atmosphere in which the First Amendment freedoms cannot survive. Plainly the Alabama law of civil libel is "a form of regulation that creates hazards to protected freedoms markedly greater than those that attend reliance upon the criminal law...."
>
> A rule compelling the critic of official conduct to guarantee the truth of all his factual assertions—and to do so on pain of libel judgments virtually unlimited in amount—leads to a comparable "self-censorship." Allowance of the defence of truth, with the burden of proving it on the defendant, does not mean that only false speech will be deterred. Even courts accepting this defence as an adequate safeguard have recognised the difficulties of adducing legal proofs that the alleged libel was true in all its factual particulars.

Mr. Justice Black in a concurring judgment —the opinion of the Court was unanimous— added:

> dramatic proof, however, that state libel laws threaten the very existence of an American press virile enough to publish unpopular views on public affairs and bold enough to criticise the conduct of public officials. The factual background of this case emphasises the imminence and enormity of that threat....
>
> We would, I think, more faithfully interpret the First Amendment by holding that at the very least it leaves the people and the press free to criticise officials and discuss public affairs with impunity. To punish the exercise of this right to discuss public affairs or to penalise it through libel judgments is to abridge or shut off discussion of the very kind most needed. This Nation, I suspect, can live in peace without libel suits based on public discussions of public affairs and public officials. But I doubt that a country can live in freedom where its people can be made to suffer physically or financially for criticising their government, its actions, or its officials. "For a representative democracy ceases to exist the moment that the public functionaries are by any means absolved from their responsibility to their constituents; and this happens whenever the constituent can be restrained in any manner from speaking, writing or publishing his opinions upon any public measure, or upon the conduct of those who may advise or execute it." An unconditional right to say what one pleases about public affairs is what I consider to be the minimum guarantee of the First Amendment....
>
> In my view, the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution afford to the citizen and to the press an absolute, unconditional privilege to criticise official conduct despite the harm which may flow from excesses and abuses. The prized American right "to speak one's mind," about public officials and affairs needs "breathing space to survive." The right should not depend upon a probing by the jury of the motivation of the citizen or press....

THE RESULT of this important decision is that in such cases the plaintiff falsely defamed can only recover damages if he proves—the onus lying on him—"actual malice," *i.e.*, that the statement was made with knowledge of its falsity or, at least, in the reckless disregard of whether it was true or false. Nor is the decision limited to cases of public officials. It has recently been extended by a U.S. District Court to a man engaged, not as an official, in public life and the references in the Supreme Court's opinion to the importance of the discussion of public affairs with impunity are significant. The principle underlying the opinion would seem to be applicable to any statement relevantly made in the context of a discussion on a matter of public concern, whether the person defamed by it was or was not in any strict sense a public man.

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Where the Law Needs Amending

I WOULD NOT suggest that in Britain we should follow in all respects the United States Law in regard to the freedom of public discussion. In some matters, as in the pre-trial or during-trial treatment of criminal offences, the practice of American newspapers may, I think, sometimes hamper the administration of justice. In the present context the proposals of the JUSTICE Working Party do not, of course, go nearly so far as the Supreme Court deem to be necessary for the protection of a free press. Under the JUSTICE proposals, the newspaper concerned would have to prove affirmatively that it took all reasonable care to ascertain the truth before it published the statements complained of and that after all proper enquiry it reasonably believed their truth. That would throw a heavy onus on the defence—reversing the position in the United States. It would be for the Court to say whether the newspaper's belief was "reasonable" on the evidence before it. Moreover, under the English proposal, if the statement was shown to be untrue the newspaper concerned would be compelled to make a public retraction and apology. No such obligation arises in America.

Whether the law of libel should be amended so as to allow this suggested defence of qualified privilege in matters of public concern is no doubt a matter on which opinions will differ, and which should be the subject of careful examination and discussion. But that there are other respects in which the law relating to libel needs urgent amendment can hardly be in doubt. Thus, the defence of qualified privilege should obviously be extended to fair and accurate reports of foreign judicial and Parliamentary proceedings. At present it is the grotesque fact under our law that should the Prime Minister of the Soviet Union or the President of the United States say anything defamatory of, for instance, our Prime Minister, our newspapers could only report the fact at the peril of having to prove the truth of what had been stated! Similarly, it is an extraordinary fact that if a newspaper or an author subsequently publishes an account of some notorious crime and names the criminal, the fact that that criminal has been convicted for that crime may afford no defence to an action brought by him for libel! The conviction is not conclusive in the Civil Courts, and the newspaper or author concerned may find himself in the unenviable position of either having to prove the offence all over again (with the same requirement as to absence of reasonable doubt as in a criminal proceeding) or of being liable in damages. I take it to be obvious that a conviction of a criminal court, either appealed against unsuccessfully or not appealed against at all, should be conclusive for these purposes in the Civil Court. These are matters of substantive law where the present rules may cause grave injustice or absurdity. They certainly inhibit free discussion.

BUT IT IS NOT ONLY the substantive law which, as I think, needs amendment. There are important procedural matters which require consideration. A long experience has made me increasingly doubtful about the efficiency of the jury system in dealing with this class of case. In most civil cases the right to trial by jury has been abolished, and there is no question that the change has, on the whole, promoted justice. The parties can, however, still insist upon a jury trial in a minority of cases, usually involving fraud or falsity, and in libel and slander.

I doubt whether Juries are the best tribunal to decide whether particular words are defamatory or not; they are apt to be swayed by emotional considerations and prejudices. In all other matters the meaning of words used is for the Judge to construe. I am sure that Juries as often as not reach wrong conclusions on the difficult and legally intricate question of whether there has been malice behind a particular publication. And it is notorious that their awards of damages are often wholly wrong.

Whether public opinion would agree to the whole issue being left to the decision of a Judge rather than a Jury is doubtful; but it is certainly a matter for grave consideration whether Juries should any longer be responsible for assessing damages in these cases. In the days when damages for personal injuries were settled by Juries widely disparate sums were awarded for similar injuries. It was only when this jurisdiction was transferred to Judges sitting alone that a sense of justice and realism was established in what has become, numerically, the most important class of case in the Civil Courts. In cases of damages for defamation, where a punitive element may still arise (correctly in some cases and incorrectly in others), it is really as inappropriate for the award of damages to be settled by Juries as it would be for them to decide the punishments to be imposed on the offenders they had convicted in the criminal courts. In recent years Juries have, in a number of cases, awarded damages which were fantastically too high. In a few cases their awards have been much too low. In advising on litigation in this field no lawyer can predict with any confidence the damages which a Jury might give, and litigation is beset with uncertainty. In cases of personal injuries, where for instance a young girl has been injured in a motor accident and

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has become paralysed from the neck down, doomed to live a life of utter misery, she may perhaps recover £25,000. In a case of libel, where no tangible damage can be established and the falsity of what had been alleged has been fully demonstrated and publicised, a Jury is yet quite capable of awarding as much as £100,000 or even more.

It is true that at long last in face of a series of extortionate awards, the House of Lords and the Court of Appeal have sought drastically to limit the power of Juries to award exemplary or punitive damages. But however carefully they may be directed by the Trial Judge, Juries may still in effect award such damages, for damages are quite at large. By a curious rule in our legal procedure when damages are awarded by a Jury the power of the Court of Appeal to upset the award is much more limited than in the case where the award was made by a Judge sitting alone. Moreover, even if the Court of Appeal consider that the Jury's award is so wholly unreasonable that no twelve sensible men could have fixed such a sum and that therefore the verdict must be upset (and this broadly is the test), the Court cannot substitute an award for what in their view would be the appropriate amount. Their jurisdiction is limited to sending the matter back for a new trial by a different Jury which may again arrive at an unreasonable verdict after the parties have had the expense, delay, and anxiety of the second trial. It is surely not too much to suggest that the Court of Appeal should have the same power of substituting what it considers is the proper figure in an appeal from a Jury's award of damages as it already has in appeals from the award of the Judge sitting alone.[2]

Crime, Contempt, & the Courts

BUT IS IT only the law of libel which needs reform? If the press is not to be unduly inhibited in its task of informing the public, what of the law relating to contempt of court?

The law as to this matter remains in an uncertain and confusing state although it must be said that its administration has been improved by the introduction of a right of appeal which had not previously existed. This reform was accomplished after a JUSTICE Committee had called attention to the highly unsatisfactory position. The difficulties of the newspapers in regard to contempt of court arise broadly under three heads. (*1*) Crime reporting: the publication of actual news, of facts sometimes ferreted out by crime reporters or of comments about some matter which is likely to be the subject of legal proceedings but before legal proceedings are actually commenced. (*2*) Reporting or commenting upon actual court proceedings. (*3*) Comment upon proceedings in Court which have been concluded.

Here, again, what is involved is no doubt a matter of balance. In some countries—curiously, and for very different reasons—the United States and the Communist countries, "trial by newspaper" has gone too far. Reporters have obtained statements from witnesses and set them out in full regardless of the rules as to admissibility of evidence; likely defendants have been interviewed, questioned and cross-questioned; crime correspondents have not only acted as detectives but sometimes almost as Judge and Jury too, reporting their conclusions in the newspapers rather than to the authorities. This may greatly embarrass the possibility of a fair trial, making it difficult to empanel a really detached and objective Jury especially in cases where identity may be involved.

Nearer home, in Scotland, the matter has gone, I think (and I apologise in advance lest this be in itself contempt of court) rather too far in the other direction. In a case against the Scottish *Daily Mail* the Lord Justice Clerk is reported to have laid down the rule that

> ... all criminal investigation and all interrogation of possible witnesses must be done exclusively by the criminal authorities and the result must only be published to the world when the ultimate trial takes place.

What was immediately involved in the actual case was the question of publication rather than investigation. The Scottish *Daily Mail* apologised and was fined the sum of £5,000. In view of the newspaper's apparent acknowledgment of error one cannot criticise the actual case. But if the principle of the decision is correctly reported, I would certainly say that this is not the law in England and would not be tolerated here. In this country it is perfectly lawful for any private citizen and, therefore, not less for newspaper reporters, to engage in criminal investigation and to interrogate possible witnesses if they are prepared to submit to it. Many matters of public concern would never have come to light at all had it not been for investigations conducted by newspapers. One may quote as an instance the recent cases where bribes had been paid to and accepted by professional footballers in order to influence their

[2] Indeed, I would go further and suggest that in all civil cases and not in relation to damages alone, the Court of Appeal should have the same jurisdiction in hearing appeals from the verdicts of Juries as it possesses in dealing with appeals from the decisions of Judges sitting alone.

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play. English law recognises the right of private individuals as well as "the criminal authorities" to prosecute criminal offences, and it follows from that that they have a complete right to investigate circumstances which seem to them to attract suspicion. It is very salutary that the Press should sometimes do so.

What should be done in regard to the publication of the results of such investigations, however, raises other considerations. It requires the exercise of a responsible discretion on the part of the newspaper concerned. Often the public interest—and it is to this, rather than the creation of circulation by the publication of sensational matter, that we are entitled to expect editors to direct themselves—may best be served by communicating the facts to the Police authorities concerned. But if the authorities seem to be uninterested, as sometimes happens —if there seems to be any suggestion of an attempt to cover up, if there is no move towards action—then certainly where no proceedings have been commenced the newspaper should publish. In my general experience newspapers in England do in fact exercise a wise discretion in these matters. Of course there have been exceptions, and I have myself on some occasions drawn strong attention to them, but usually the Press act in close co-operation with the Police and defer to any representations which the Police may make. We do not have in England and would not tolerate prior trial by newspaper. If some particular publication would be calculated to prejudice the fair trial of proceedings which it was known were about to start, newspapers should and will refrain from publication and the possible sanction of contempt proceedings must remain. But subject to that the newspapers must retain their right to independence, their right to investigate, and their right in a proper case to disclose.

When proceedings in Court are actually pending, the position, in this country, is quite different. Then it is right, I think, that comment should be stilled and nothing more done than fairly to report the proceedings as they go on. No newspaper in this country would dream of publishing anything which might, even indirectly, affect the Jury or Court in dealing objectively with the case before it. On the criminal side of our law, I do not think any difficulty arises with these cases which are *sub judice*.

But real difficulty does arise, and is not easy to resolve, in some civil cases which are *sub judice*. The broad rule is the same on the criminal and civil sides of the law—there must be no comment about that which is *sub judice*. But in civil cases this rule may lead to abuse. This often happens, for instance, at elections. A candidate may make some defamatory statement which attracts great publicity. Somebody issues a writ. Then although the subject-matter is still of great public interest discussion is stifled. And the author of the original statement is able to say—often too gladly—that his lips are closed! In my own first election campaign a Conservative newspaper published a defamatory statement. I at once issued a writ and publicised the fact that I had retained Sir Patrick Hastings. For the rest of the election the opposition press had to treat me with great respect. When it was all over the matter was settled by a small payment to a local hospital. The fact is that sometimes writs are issued with the deliberate purpose of appearing to make a matter *sub judice* and so stifling further embarrassing comment. That done, the complainant often lets the whole matter go to sleep. This is quite a familiar device. The Press should not tolerate it.

In my own view—I make no charge for it—it is not necessarily a contempt for one newspaper to comment upon the subject matter of an alleged libel published in another or to repeat the libel although a writ may have been issued against the other—although of course it would have to be ready to justify. Indeed it is not necessarily a contempt for the same newspaper to repeat its own libel after a writ has been served unless there has been an injunction to restrain it. These matters should be clarified by legislation.

Finally, in regard to these problems about Court proceedings, I come to newspaper comment after the conclusion of proceedings. Newspapers ought to regard themselves as perfectly free to comment, in a responsible and temperate way, on the manner in which proceedings have been conducted or upon their result or on the sentences imposed. "Justice," as was said in a famous phrase by a great English Judge, "is not a cloistered virtue: she must be allowed to suffer the scrutiny and respectful even though outspoken comments of ordinary men...." It has often seemed to me that newspapers have either been unaware that they are entitled to be critical of judicial proceedings and even of judges, or that they are too mealy-mouthed about it. I think that in this country now we probably have a better Bench of Judges than we have ever had. The standard is high. Yet there are, notoriously, one or two Courts which cause anxiety. The Press should be constantly vigilant in watching Court proceedings and if lapses do occur from our generally high standard, they should be courageous and say so.

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There remains one final comment. At present it is possible for anybody to initiate proceedings for contempt of court. In 1953 Lord Goddard, one of the greatest Chief Justices the country has ever had, suggested that proceedings for criminal contempt of court should be brought only at the instance of the Attorney-General. Twelve years is a sufficient period of gestation for legal reforms. It is high time that this suggestion was adopted. It is eminently suitable that the Attorney-General should make himself responsible for the protection of the Courts in this way. If he did so, one might feel sure that the weapon of contempt proceedings would only be used in grave and clear cases.

State Secrets

I TURN NOW to the publication in newspapers of so-called official or governmental secrets: information in the possession of Departments of State which they do not care to disclose or information about matters taking place within Departments. In Britain there is legislation known as the Official Secrets Acts, and there are other statutes which have a somewhat similar effect in forbidding disclosure in particular cases. This is not a matter which we can expect to be left entirely to the discretion of the newspapers. Even assuming, as I hope we can in this country, that all newspapers, with one possible exception, are loyal and seeking to promote the best interests of the country, the fact remains that not every newspaper editor can at every moment be fully informed in every case whether or not disclosure of some particular matter might be detrimental to the State. There must, therefore, be some degree of control by law. The important thing is to ensure that it does not go further than the necessity requires—and that indeed is a danger, for the moment it is admitted to be right that *some* things should not be published, the matter becomes one of degree and those who seek to preserve secrecy in order perhaps to conceal mistakes or inefficiency in their Departments may push the restraint on publicity too far. There are perhaps four categories of cases in which it may be arguable that the public interest justifies a restraint on disclosure:

1. Information prejudicial to the security of the State—for instance, matters relating to defence or police.
2. Information prejudicial to the national interest—matters concerning foreign relations, diplomatic negotiations and, perhaps, matters affecting banking, currency, and commodity reserves so far as they are matters for the State.
3. Information concerning matters of State, for instance, in regard to an impending budget, the premature disclosure of which could provide unfair opportunities for private financial gain.
4. Information provided to Government Departments in regard to matters of State and on promise of non-disclosure.

In regard to these four matters, the realities of political life and of State interests justify a restraint on publication or, indeed, even on receipt of information without authority. In regard to these, it is legitimate for the State to forbid disclosure or publication.

But how is it to be decided whether a particular matter comes within the scope of one or other of these four prohibitions? Not merely by the *ipse dixit* of the Government Departments concerned. It should be a matter for the Courts to decide. Accordingly, it should be an answer to a charge that some particular publication had infringed the Official Secrets Acts or similar legislation to show that the national interest or legitimate private interests confided to the State were not likely to be harmed by the publication in question, and that the information was passed and received and published in good faith and in the public interest.

This would overcome what has tended to be an abuse of this kind of legislation, namely that the Official Secrets Acts have been used in order to prevent the passing or publication of information not in itself prejudicial to the national interest at all and relating solely to the efficiency or integrity of a Government Department or public authority. Thus, any information about what goes on in a prison establishment has been considered protected by the Official Secrets Acts. This is not the legitimate purpose of such laws which were really intended originally to be directed against espionage. There is no need for, indeed there positively ought not to be any special statutory protection in such cases. It is true that disclosures may be damaging. It is equally damaging to great industrial concerns or international corporations if employees disclose confidential matters. But the latter have to rely on contractual remedies: these are in fact a sufficient protection. Government Departments and public authorities should enjoy no more when questions not likely to harm the national, as distinct from the departmental interest, are concerned. It is salutary that in such matters Departments should be subject to the risk of disclosure of misfeasance and incompetence.

RESTING THE MATTER in this way, however, would leave the Press in some uncertainty and embarrassment. When could they safely publish and when not? Only the result of a trial could

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show. In Britain, therefore, in our empirical way we have established a system under which there is an official Press and Broadcasting Committee whose Secretary, in an informal and confidential manner, issues notices to newspaper editors in regard to any sensitive matters of which they are likely to hear and publication of which would be likely to be harmful to the interests of the State. These are called *"D"* Notices. They have no legal or statutory effect. Newspapers are in law quite entitled to disregard them—and to publish. Occasionally in the past the system has been abused by the issue of a *"D"* notice intended to prevent discussion or disclosures of some matter *not* vital to national security, sometimes *already* published in foreign newspapers, and simply in order to protect some Department from criticism. This has not happened often. There is at present a marked degree of mutual confidence and understanding between the Press and Colonel Lohan, the Secretary of the Committee concerned, and the system is working well. It puts editors on their guard: they remain free to publish if they think right but they have to exercise the responsibility of personal decision in the light of the circumstances made known to them in confidence. In practice this system has, at least in recent years, in general, prevented the Official Secrets Acts forming a serious restriction on the liberty of the Press in matters relating to National Security. But Departments not concerned with military security sometimes still continue to threaten the Press with dire consequences under the Act. Its utility depends upon mutual confidence between the Committee and newspapers. Given that, it is a most valuable system.

THE TENDENCY of Government Departments in this country is to shield themselves behind a curtain of secrecy in which the only window is controlled by a public relations official trained in the act of conveying a minimum of information with a maximum of self-righteousness. It is notable that in the United States the Congress is presently directing itself in exactly the opposite course.

There has recently been passed by the Senate a Bill (S.1160) with the significant title of *The Bill to clarify and protect the right of the public to information*. In the Judiciary Committee's Report (No. 813), attention is called to the fact that the existing law (unlike any law in this country) does require some public disclosures of information concerning the activities of Government Departments. It is said—and most pertinently from the point of view of practice in the United Kingdom—that "the serious deficiencies" fall into four categories:

1. There is excepted from the operation of the whole section "any function of the United States requiring secrecy in the public interest...." There is no attempt in the bill or its legislative history to delimit "in the public interest," and there is no authority granted for any review of the use of this vague phrase by Federal officials who wish to withhold information.

2. Although one sub-section of the existing Act requires the agency to make available to public inspection "all final opinions or orders in the adjudication of cases," it vitiates this command by adding the following limitation "...except those required for good cause to be held confidential...."

3. As to public records generally, another subsection requires their availability "to persons properly and directly concerned except information held confidential for good cause found." This is a double-barrelled loophole because not only is there the vague phrase "for good cause found," there is also a further excuse for withholding if persons are not "properly and directly concerned."

4. There is no remedy in case of wrongful withholding of information from citizens by Government officials.

The purpose of the Bill is cogently set out in the Committee's Report:

> In introducing S. 1666, the predecessor of the present bill, Senator Long quoted the words of Madison, who was chairman of the committee which drafted the first amendment to the Constitution:
>
> > "Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own governors, must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives. A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or perhaps both."
>
> To-day the very vastness of our Government and its myriad of agencies makes it difficult for the electorate to obtain that "popular information" of which Madison spoke. But it is only when one further considers the hundreds of departments, branches, and agencies which are not directly responsible to the people, that one begins to understand the great importance of having an information policy of full disclosure.
>
> Although the theory of an informed electorate is vital to the proper operation of a democracy, there is nowhere in our present law a statute which affirmatively provides for that information. Many witnesses have testified that the present public information section of the Administrative Procedure Act has been used more as an excuse for withholding than as a disclosure statute.
>
> Section 3 of the Administrative Procedure Act, that section which this bill would amend, is full of loopholes which allow agencies to deny legitimate information to the public. Innumerable times it appears that information is withheld only

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to cover up embarrassing mistakes or irregularities and the withholding justified by such phrases in section 3 of the Administrative Procedure Act as—"requiring secrecy in the public interest" or "required for good cause to be held confidential."

It is the purpose of the present bill to eliminate such phrases, to establish a general philosophy of full agency disclosure unless information is exempted under clearly delineated statutory language and to provide a court procedure by which citizens and the press may obtain information wrongfully withheld. It is important and necessary that the present void be filled. It is essential that agency personnel, and the courts as well, be given definitive guidelines in setting information policies. Standards such as "for good cause" are certainly not sufficient.

At the same time that a broad philosophy of "freedom of information" is enacted into law, it is necessary to protect certain equally important rights of privacy with respect to certain information in Government files, such as medical and personnel records. It is also necessary for the very operation of our Government to allow it to keep confidential certain material such as the investigatory files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

It is not an easy task to balance the opposing interests but it is not an impossible one either. It is not necessary to conclude that to protect one of the interests the other must, of necessity, either be abrogated or substantially subordinated. Success lies in providing a workable formula which encompasses, balances, and protects all interests, yet places emphasis on the fullest responsible disclosure.

IT IS REFRESHING to find this insistence upon a duty on the part of Government to communicate information to the public at large in contrast to the secretiveness which, as exemplified both in the present administration of the Official Secrets Acts and in the doctrine of Crown privilege from disclosure in the Courts, is traditional in this country. Parliament, engaged as we are assured it is in the task of modernising Britain, might do worse than to pay some attention to these matters.

The law is not an exact science. In England it is not even codified: we lack the constitutional guarantees or basic laws which other countries possess. Newspapers in seeking to obtain and publish information which it is in the public interest to know are beset on all sides with doubts and arguments as to what they may properly disclose. Often these have to be resolved at once, perhaps late at night, or the news becomes stale. Newspapers generally take care to prevent the publication of anything untrue. When they act in good faith and with a true sense of public responsibility they should be protected if occasionally they go wrong.

Lord Shawcross

LETTERS

Churchill Reconsidered

I AM A LITTLE surprised that Goronwy Rees' perceptive article does not make any mention of the influence of Churchill's command of the English language, written and spoken. "In the beginning was the Word"—almost literally in the beginning, for there are those who think *The River War* the best thing Churchill ever wrote. But compare Churchill's account of the First World War with the clumsy, dragged-out effort of Lloyd George; read the life of Marlborough and the volumes of English history which so fascinatingly embody the "captains and kings" concept of history on which Rees has commented; above all, of course, study his own highly-personalised narrative of "his" war—and you will understand easily enough why the myth of Churchill has stamped itself indelibly upon the consciousness and memories of his fellow-citizens. He needed no Boswell, no Herodotus; he wrote all his own story, and in words which owe nothing to a classical or conventionally literary education. (Readers of Lady Violet's book will have chuckled over his enquiring, when over thirty, who Keats was, or reading Blake and saying, "I never knew the old admiral wrote verse.") People, even well-read people, do tend to underrate the enormous advantage, in the eyes of posterity, which the word-spinner has over his fellows. Only think how Cobbett—who had many of the same qualities as Churchill—has pushed off the historical scene the great number of his fellow radicals, simply by the power and eloquence of *Rural Rides* and the *Political Register*.

The spoken word also. As the years go on, "Churchilliana" will multiply; already there are a good many about, and one is reduced to saying, "this, or that one certainly *sounds* authentic"—I am here resisting a strong temptation to retail my own "best" samples. But the important ones are true, and this matters. He *did* say, "blood, sweat and tears"; he did say, "we shall fight on the beaches"; he did say, "some chicken, some neck"; and so put into phrase what so many wanted to believe they felt at the supreme moment of testing. And so helped them to save their country—what could Halifax have done at the time of Dunkirk?

For of course it is true—as I wrote myself in February last—that on the day of the funeral (which was not *itself* stained by any "mass hysteria") we were in fact mourning not so much Churchill himself as the end of the Empire over which, whatever he said, he all but presided. Even granted that the British are better at funerals and songs of defeat (like *The Burial of Sir John Moore*) than at victory jubilations and triumphal lays, surely a good number of those who looked on at that impressive spectacle must have had "Never Again" at the back of their minds. Never Again would British shoulders "hold the sky suspended," as Housman

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wrote in 1914; Never Again would a cartoonist proudly write up the words "Very well—Alone," as Low did after the French surrender. We knew then that the dominance of Britain was over—*almost* one with Nineveh and Tyre, however loudly the Conservative party conference, with amazing lack of realism, may sing *Land of Hope and Glory*. One of Churchill's many misjudgments was to tie himself, in the middle of the war, to a party with so little historical sense, the party of the "Guilty Men"; it was the fear that he intended to bring them back into power which was as responsible as anything else for the election results of 1945.

IT IS TRUE that he was the great war-leader, or more correctly, the great inspiration, the great trumpeter, and for the reasons that Rees has given. But even here there is, if one looks close, a visible contradiction. He *enjoyed* war; he enjoyed actual soldiering, war propaganda, war tactics, war strategy on the large scale, and equally enjoyed the minute details of flags, uniforms, and all the trivia about which he spattered memoranda around. His war memoirs prove that. But was it not all of the stuff of romance, of war stories and war spies since the world began? Did he ever really take in the realities of modern warfare and its aftermath, or did he not, rather, keep Reconstruction in a different compartment of his mind, as a really rather tiresome and banausic subject? If he did not, how did he come to swallow, almost whole, it would seem, the Morgenthau plan and Unconditional Surrender?

No one will ever know for certain. He has his own imperishable glory—such words he would have liked!—and even if it was won in part at the expense of others few will grudge him the five magnificent years. But one wonders a little whether, during the days of coma preceding his own death, when he must surely have meditated with some slight satisfaction at the thought of the funeral ceremony which he himself had prescribed in so much loving detail, he ever gave a thought to the man who had provided him with his unique opportunity—the burnt-out corpse in the bunker in Berlin?

MARGARET COLE

London

Peter Weiss and Auschwitz

By Martin Esslin

JOEL CARMICHAEL's letter attacking Peter Weiss [ENCOUNTER, January], his essay on Auschwitz [ENCOUNTER, December], and his play *The Investigation* is neither very fair nor very accurate. I disagree with Peter Weiss in his newly acquired attitude of support for the East German régime as much as Mr. Carmichael does, but I feel that surely there has been enough muddled thinking, enough bandying about of misunderstood facts and prejudices in the ideological polemics between East and West.

First of all: *The Investigation* does *not* represent "the first major attempt to cope with the death-camps as a theatrical subject." Rolf Hochhuth's *Der Stellvertreter* ("The Representative" in Britain, "The Deputy" in the United States) preceded Weiss' play by about two years. And it is precisely as a reaction to that play that the bland, documentary, almost barren approach of Weiss' play can best be understood. *The Investigation* has been criticised for containing "nothing but" the bare words used by the participants in the Frankfurt trial, rearranged, compressed—and sublimated into a language which in all its spareness is carried along by so subtle a rhythm that it actually *has* become free verse.

The Investigation therefore contains *no comments* that are Peter Weiss' own opinions. To attribute to the play anything like a tendency, to call it "a narrowly conceived attack on the West German régime," is nonsense. Some of the witnesses who appeared at the Frankfurt trial tried to involve the West German régime and so did the East Berlin lawyer who appeared as the advocate of some Auschwitz victims resident in East Germany. Weiss quotes their statements with the same detachment with which he quotes the statements of the accused, notably the long plea to let bygones be bygones with which the play ends (and which therefore receives considerably more weight than any other statement in the play). Having attributed a wickedly calculated intent to Weiss, Mr. Carmichael then accuses him of muddled thinking because he does not carry his plan through with single-minded determination. But all that has happened is that Weiss conscientiously transcribed the actual movement of argument and counterargument, accusation and self-justification of a long trial, leaving it to his audience to make of these what they like.

Nor is it at all strange that the word Jew is not mentioned in the play. It is precisely in order to de-emotionalise the issue that Weiss omitted the names, nationalities, and personal circumstances of all the witnesses and used, when it was necessary, words which were without any emotional overtones, although they clearly stood for the things involved. Anyone who knows enough German will immediately recognise that the word "*Verfolgte*" (*i.e.* those under racial persecution) stands for Jews. Mr. Carmichael's inability to get this purely linguistic point also accounts for his attributing to Weiss the blunder of having mentioned one-and-a-half-million Russians killed and then later giving the figure of the total murders in the death-camps as six million. In fact, in the passage referred to, the Jews are unmistakably identified: ("Of the nine million six hundred thousand racially persecuted people/who lived in the territories/

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dominated by their persecutors/six millions have disappeared/and it must be assumed/that most of them/have been deliberately exterminated"). Indeed the paragraph quoted closes with the words: "But in order to calculate the total number of unarmed victims/in this war of extermination/we must add to the six million/killed for racial reasons/three million Soviet prisoners/shot or starved to death/as well as ten million civilians/who perished in the occupied countries" (p. 207 of the Suhrkamp edition of the play). Mr. Carmichael surely could have referred to the text of *The Investigation* before accusing Peter Weiss of confusion and politically biased treatment of his subject.

IN FACT THE TEXT of the play, being a wholly objective rendering of the proceedings of the Frankfurt trial, is free of any evidence of the author's bias one way or another. It is true that Peter Weiss has recently publicly declared his support for Marxism and his sympathies for the East German régime. Here too, in order to score an easy point, Mr. Carmichael distorts the facts. He implies that Weiss was so impressed with the production of his *Marat/Sade* play at Rostock, "that he started to train himself in Marxism. He started work on an immense trilogy dealing with the cosmic conflict between the Have and the Have-not nations, cast in the form of the *Divine Comedy*" of which the play on the Frankfurt trial originally formed part. There is here an unfair implication that *a*) Weiss only became interested in Marxism after he had seen that performance of his play he liked so well in East Germany; and *b*) that he embarked on his modern paraphrase on the *Divine Comedy* as an act of gratitude for his good reception in the East. Both these implications are totally untrue. Long before there was any question of a production at Rostock, Weiss told me that one of the main themes of the *Marat/Sade* play was an exploration of the Marxist position on revolutions; and long before there was any question of a production of the *Marat/Sade* play in East Germany (where indeed it was initially attacked as ideologically unacceptable) he was already working on, and discussing, his plan to recreate the *Divine Comedy* as a play in three parts. Peter Weiss is a complex literary personality and the story of his artistic and political evolution is also far too complex to be reduced to such *simpliste*—and factually wrong—notions of cause and effect.

What Mr. Carmichael has done is to graft a polemic with Weiss' various short *political* pronouncements on to a discussion of his *play*. Because Weiss has, in interviews and articles, expressed disenchantment with the West German political and social scene (with which many people, notably most West German intellectuals, are equally disenchanted), because he has spoken of his support for the "socialist" cause, Mr. Carmichael diligently reads this attitude into his play. Some of the witnesses at the Auschwitz trial spoke of the profits derived by German industrialists from the death camps, *ergo* the play pursues the narrow objective of blackening West German industry! But by the same token anyone mentioning those undoubted facts would automatically become an anti-Western, Communist spokesman. Shall we no longer be allowed to be against Hitler and his régime, merely because the Communists also profess anti-Nazi sentiments? What strange logic, what dangerous argumentation! Mr. Carmichael accuses Weiss of saying in his play that "the hatred for Bolshevism is the successor to the hatred of the Jews." In fact this was one of the opinions voiced in the trial by a Communist witness. Is it any better if Mr. Carmichael now equates any expression of criticism of West German conditions with blackest (or indeed reddest) Bolshevism? Is Bernd Naumann, the reporter of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* who covered the trial at great length (and has just published his despatches in a volume of almost six hundred pages) also a Bolshevik, merely because he reports the same statements from the same witnesses and counsels for the prosecution?

PETER WEISS' POLITICS simply do not enter into any critical assessment of this particular play. It so happens that Weiss, who is probably the finest prose stylist now writing in German, is an artist who follows an aesthetic somewhat akin to that of the French *nouveau roman*; that is, he is scrupulous in excluding any personal sentiment, opinion, or comment from his artistic work. This excessive objectivity of his approach may be aesthetically wrong or right; that is not the issue here. What is at issue is that in the stories and plays he has published hitherto the author's bias was excluded to the point of paradox. In the *Marat/Sade* play he erected a whole set of barriers between himself and his work by attributing the discussion to Marat and de Sade, but then making it clear that de Sade was in fact the author of Marat's part as well, and that both de Sade and the actor who played Marat were lunatics and therefore beyond the point of indulging in rational discourse. In his magnificent prose work *Das Gespraech der drei Gehenden*, three characters reflect the same reality in three diametrically different ways and the author remains silent as to which point of view is the correct one. Weiss followed exactly the same method in *The Investigation*. Any importation of polemics with his private political views is therefore both irrelevant and unfair.

Whether *The Investigation* is an artistic success or not, whether the death-camps *can* be dealt with by mere factual, dead-pan reporting of the evidence at a trial of minor concentration camp guards, is another matter. This is not the place to go into that question. What matters here is to show that any honest critical assessment of such an undertaking must start from the work itself rather than arguments against the private political views of the author, from a proper regard for the text of the work under discussion, accurate knowledge about its background, and above all, in the case of an artist of Peter Weiss' stature, from a proper respect for one of the major personalities of contemporary European literature. To snipe at Weiss because he sympathises with Marxism is as foolish as to reject T. S. Eliot as a high Anglican Conservative, Ezra Pound as a Fascist or, for that matter, Brecht or Picasso as Communists.

MARTIN ESSLIN

London

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Beyond African Dictatorship?

After Solon what? In so far as the new states of Africa are concerned a definitive answer is unlikely in our lifetime. With the normal impatience of contemporaries, we wish the life-cycle of institutions would obligingly speed up to satisfy our curiosity. It is this impatience which leads Professor Sir Arthur Lewis [Encounter, August 1965], some of whose perceptive observations would be helpful in some parts of Africa for some of the time, to be excessively schematic.

He is most right when he accuses the departing ex-colonial Powers of being themselves too rigid in deciding what was good for their heirs; he is most guilty of the same offence when he presumes that gadgets like proportional representation or compulsory coalition can be generalised into a standard African version of a mixed constitution. For example, only British doctrinaire opposition to proportional representation (since overcome in the case of British Guiana) prevented a peaceful transition to majority Afro-Shirazi rule in Zanzibar before the transfer of power, thus making the subsequent bloody revolution unnecessary. Likewise the "compulsory coalition" device, based (except in the Western Region) on one-party political units which are as large as other African states, will serve for a while to hold the Federation of Nigeria together. Generally speaking, Professor Lewis' ideas are more obviously applicable to Nigeria, from which he takes many of his concrete examples, than to anywhere else.

Compulsory coalitions may in some circumstances be a good idea. They compensate for one principal drawback to what is misleadingly called "the two-party system," namely, that there is no such system. By this I mean that unless (which is theoretically conceivable) two parties and two parties alone were to be legally permitted,[1] there is no known way of ensuring that a Western-type democratic election does not produce more than two. Apart from Switzerland where the coalition principle is actually compulsory, the forced post-election partnership of opposites in practice makes Government possible in several European democracies (including Italy, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Finland). One disadvantage of this device (particularly in the last three instances) is that it is liable to leave a country without a Government at all for weeks or even months at a time, especially after an election. These three established European states do not suffer all that much harm from what would scarcely be tolerable in new struggling African states.

It is true that after the last, mismanaged, election in Nigeria a "compulsory coalition" was patched together over a period of time but this success rested perilously on the exceptional relationship between Azikiwe and Tafawa Balewa (which came very close indeed to breaking down under the strain) and it had as one of its consequences the further multiplication of the number of fat patronage-stuffed Ministries which had even before that been under fire as excessive. When a coalition is required one of its accepted consequences must usually be mutual complicity in corruption (or, at the least, in patronage politics). The danger is that in the generally relaxed political climate which comes with the abatement of both competition and discipline the political class as such then becomes discredited; the only recourse becomes the Army, possibly allied to the unions. A single-party state *may*—though it also may not—be able to evolve a better machine for self-criticism and purification than a compulsory coalition that rests on everybody having political jobs.

There is a further difficulty with the "compulsory coalition" that it appears to require a Head of State who is different from the Prime Minister to patch coalitions together. On the one hand most African States genuinely seem to find the concept of a national symbol without executive power awkward and unreal; on the other hand, even a Head of State with no more formal constitutional power than a British or Belgian monarch could easily extend his political role at the expense of the Prime Minister if the function of forming a Government involved a juggling act with a mass of minority parties. President Kasavubu of the Congo was able to dismiss Patrice Lumumba constitutionally because his decree was countersigned by two Ministers who owed no party allegiance to the Prime Minister.

Reference to the Congo brings to mind the fact that the one existing document which most nearly corresponds to Professor Lewis' ideal constitutional model for Africa is the *Loi Fondamentale aux Structures* with which the unfortunate Congolese were endowed by the departing Belgians in 1960. This instrument, combined with the election laws, provided for a form of proportional representation (though misunderstanding of its arithmetic caused much resentment of the results in many districts), for an element of compulsory coalition at the centre arising from the need to have at least one Minister from each Province and an elaborate (almost Swiss) form of compulsory coalition at the Provincial level achieved by a proportional system of electing Ministers in the Provincial Assemblies. This last provision offered such opportunities of obstruction to parties dissatisfied with the election results that in two provinces out of six (Leopoldville and Katanga) there would have been no governments on Independence Day if the rules had not been changed in mid-play.

It is all very well inventing a formula to the effect that all parties with more than 20 per cent of the vote should be sent for by the Head of State to participate in the Government, but supposing in a system which is biased against large parties there are none of these, or only one, with many minority parties under the quota. In fragile new states it is surely undesirable to encourage a situation like this.

[1] Some American states approach this point by placing legal obstacles in the way of third parties qualifying to appear on the ballot. In Tanzania two candidates and two candidates only of the *same* party—TANU—may stand for each constituency, an interesting experiment.

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New York

"MANY YEARS *ago," observed Maine's Senator Margaret Chase Smith, at a dinner in Manhattan, "the word square was one of the most honoured words in our vocabulary. The square deal was an honest deal. A square meal was a full and good meal. It was the square shooter rather than the sharp-shooter who was admired. What is a square today? He's the fellow who never learned to get away with it. . . .*

TIME

Bucharest

"MONOLITH," *a word favoured by the Communists in earlier times to express the conviction that they were acting as one for a single revolutionary purpose, has fallen into disuse except with the Rumanians. Few of the ruling parties even profess to have a monolithic character today, although they might like to have it.*

Substituting for the concept of a monolith are such words as "cohesion," "alliance," and "collaboration." Yet the Bucharest leadership has been telling guests from 51 Communist parties at its ninth congress that the Rumanians are a "monolithic and vigorous force."

NEW YORK TIMES

London

AFTER *a complaint by one of his readers a newspaper editor has been told that certain entries under the word "Jew" will be deleted from* Odhams Concise Dictionary. *Mr. Morris Linder, editor of the* Jewish Times, *of Glasgow, said he had received from the publishers "a handsome offer" to remove certain words not only from future editions, but also from current stocks and unbound copies. The entries gave the definitions "an extortionist, bargainer or money-lender," and also the usage of "jew" as a verb, meaning to cheat or outwit. These were qualified as "slang." Miss A. M. Macdonald, editor of* Chambers's Dictionary, *said complaints were made to her fairly regularly about details under a number of words, among them "wog" and "Jesuit."*

THE TIMES

London

WORDS *like alienation, which until recently were only to be found within the covers of sociology textbooks, are on the lips of every television interviewer and every half-articulate protester. There are dangers in all this. Our collective failings are so well-documented and so often referred to that it is not surprising if we do not always seek a remedy. Our self-analysis is often so severe that it seems to weaken the will to act. The very complexity of our explanations of how we got to where we are discourages us from seeking a way out. We live in an age when the critics of society are legion but those with the will to change it few and far between.*

THE GUARDIAN

New York

THE OFFICIAL *United Nations English translation of Pope Paul's comments on birth control differs from the translation released earlier by the Papal Visit News Centre and used in news reports, it was learned yesterday. The Pontiff spoke in French.*

The United Nations version of the address on October 4th has the Pope exhorting General Assembly delegates not to "encourage" birth control. In the earlier rendering he asked them, more sweepingly, not to "favour" it.

Population control is on the General Assembly agenda for this session.

NEW YORK TIMES

London

ALTHOUGH *examiners expect to find howlers in a candidate's answers, it was the examiners themselves who made the howlers in the University of London G.C.E. Ordinary level, French examination taken a month ago. In the translation section of the paper, sat by over 35,000 candidates, they used a phrase which was "utter nonsense" to any Frenchman. They talked of "gâte" meaning to spoil cakes, when they should have used "brûle."*

"Anyone who knows anything about French knows that the word 'gâter' means to spoil a person and cannot possibly be taken to refer to bread," a spokesman from the French Embassy's cultural department said yesterday. The examiners also made another howler: they talked of "petits pains grillés, trempés de beurre," when the correct word should have been "gorgés de beurre" or simply "beurrés." On this one, the French Lycée commented: "It's just not French. No one in France would ever say this, and if a Frenchman wouldn't say it how can an Englishman be expected to translate it."

Speaking about the howlers, Mr. George Bruce, secretary of the London Board, said yesterday: "I am not surprised. When one has English people setting the examination we must expect them to make mistakes like this. What is surprising is that we have not received a word of criticism about it. There were 80 assistant examiners marking the 35,000 papers and not one has spoken up."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Elba

ELBANS *themselves regard the growth of their tourist industry with mixed feelings. Their natural hospitality inclines them to give a warm welcome to visitors from abroad. At the same time, traditional moral attitudes, like the reluctance to allow their daughters to work in hotels, acts in the opposite direction. Lack of education and a disinclination to work long hours are additional factors which serve to separate the local people from their more ambitious countrymen from the mainland. The line* "ABLE WAS I ERE I SAW ELBA" *is not just a clever aphorism which can be read from right to left as well as left to right; it also reflects the attitude of those for whom the soil provides an easy subsistence.*

THE TIMES

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If the quota system is held to encourage small parties to merge to meet the quota, why should not a winner-takes-all system encourage them to merge with the winner, as has happened in Kenya and is progressively happening to Uganda's great advantage in that hitherto loose-limbed country?

Sir Arthur cites Ghana and Dahomey to prove that parties based on "rich areas" will not willingly agree to a party merger. But this was manifestly untrue of Kenya (where the Kikuyu and Luo, supporters of the unitarian Kanu party, possess the richer areas) and is becoming untrue in Uganda where Sir Arthur's preferred method was tried, did not work too well, and is being peacefully abandoned.

IT IS PRECISELY within an *omnium gatherum* nation-wide party that it is possible to have continuously shifting personal and group combinations in the manner of the U.S. Congress which Professor Lewis cites with approval. If the African constitutional and electoral systems encouraged small ethnic parties the result would be all countervailing and no power. Moreover, the U.S. Congress (as we have recently seen) only emerges from several decades of deadlock when the party balance within it is so lop-sided as to provoke observers to lament the threatened passing of the two-party system.

The singular feature of Sir Arthur Lewis' whole approach is his perfunctory treatment of the urgency of economic development, the field in which he made his own reputation. Surely built-in political deadlock cannot be consistent with rapid growth in a technically backward country. Sir Arthur's conclusions are most fully supported by the instance of Nigeria. But would he consider the decision to have two and perhaps three steel industries in that country as evidence that there was no need to seek first the political kingdom?

KEITH KYLE

St. Michael's Vicarage,
St. Albans, Herts.

Pornography and Privacy

NONSENSE to George Steiner's attack on "pornographic literature" in your October issue. His argument has only one solid basis: this literature may be boring. But if so, he must argue from specific cases. A *genre* cannot be dismissed by generalities; and if sexuality is limited in its varieties, so is every other *single* operation of the human body/mind. That pornographers (whether talented or untalented) concentrate on genital and anal sexuality in their direct manifestations rather than in their psychic sublimations is the correct direction which Steiner's attack could have taken.

Rather he chooses to identify the new freedom in literature with SS sadism and "invasions of privacy" which, according to Steiner, mark much of modern society. In rejecting SS sadism and invasions of privacy Steiner thinks he has rejected the new literature. The argument is spurious, and by extension harmful.

No one will deny that SS sadism is repugnant; and many will contend that modern research sometimes crosses the boundaries of taste. Steiner finds a connection between SS horror and the new literature; implicitly he suggests a causal link (though I am not sure which way his causality runs). And in condemning the SS, he condemns sadistic literature. But certainly, causally speaking, the literature is irrelevant to the historical occurrence of sadism: it neither caused the SS nor was it brought into being by the SS. To blame World War II on the Marquis de Sade is just as nonsensical as to blame de Sade on World War II. And to condemn sadistic literature because we abhor sadistic behaviour is dangerous on two counts: first it might reassure some that by suppressing the literature the behavioural incidence of sadism will decrease (the argument of *all* the censors), and, secondly, following from this, a new censorship may arise out of such hopes. Suggesting causal links between what literature represents and literature is always risky: using Steiner's logic, must we not suppress *Crime and Punishment* because we deplore the axe murders of old ladies? And so forth all the way back to the *Oresteia* and Homer. In fact, Steiner is writing as a sociologist and not a literary critic; and he is an illogical sociologist.

Steiner's last, and most serious, objection to the new literature is that it "invades one's privacy," just as some contemporary research does. Once again, he transfers his abhorrence of a real-life event to its aesthetic and fictionalised representation. But what else is a novel but an excursion into privacy? And by what logic are we to understand that the sex habits—however minutely described—of Mr. Grundy are any more private than the thought habits of Mrs. Grundy? And, in fact, don't the two frequently overlap? Are we to condemn James Joyce and Henry James because they explored in great detail the private subtleties of their heroes' thoughts? Such condemnations, when justified, must come from a detailed analysis of the texts in question and must be based on aesthetic, not sociological, criteria. Furthermore, as any study of the history of aesthetics or literature will show, aesthetic criteria are relativistic.

Steiner obviously believes that there is a hierarchy of privacy and that the bedroom, not the mind, is the most private place of all. He then argues that privacy is guaranteed if there are no intrusions and that this lack of intrusion is equivalent to freedom properly understood. Indeed one might argue that the researcher "intrudes," although, as best I know, subjects—even those masturbating faculty wives—offer their persons willingly. But intrusion or not, suppressing literature will not eliminate this kind of research. Frankly, the novelist *cannot* intrude: he is read or not read as one chooses.

The most harmful extension of Steiner's argument is that if he had his way the reader would once more be deprived of his essential freedom of choice; and the underground literature, once more submerged, would be deprived of the stimulation of open criticism. Let Steiner talk; I'll go with Milton (that old Puritan!) and his *Areopagitica*.

RICHARD SCHECHNER

Tulane Drama Review,
New Orleans, Louisiana

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Indonesia Confronted

ONCE in Calabria I saw a showman with a camel. While the creature itself was apparent in all its features, the showman's eloquence, lifted from a 15th-century Bestiary, bore such a remote relationship to the zoological facts observable to anyone who chose to view the animal that it was hard to believe he was discussing the same creature as he was exhibiting. Mr. Herbert Luethy's articles "Indonesia Confronted" [ENCOUNTER, December 1965 and January 1966] display in precisely the same way, not the Indonesia before his eyes but the Indonesia of Western propaganda.

Apart from the astigmatic outlook on all things "East of Suez" that has bedevilled our thinking and confounded our endeavour from Suez to Dien Bien Phu and is perhaps best exemplified in the despair of Messrs. Michael Stewart and Max Beloff at the impossibility of a Teach-in at Moscow or Hanoi without reflecting on just how likely they would be to find one in Saigon or Singapore (*e.g.*, the Hotel Indonesia in towering luxury above the squalor and distress—and the Hong Kong Hilton? and Raffles?), the chief impact of Mr. Luethy's comment is its failure to reconcile *his* Sukarno or *his* Indonesia with a country that defeated two Dutch efforts at a comeback, the right-wing coup of Turco Westerling in 1950, the Colonels' rising of 1959, and the Communist upheaval of 1965 while maintaining throughout the unity of a hundred million people and three thousand separate islands, whereas neighbouring Malaysia, primed with foreign capital and policed by foreign troops, could not keep ten million people together for two years.

Since 1945 Indonesia has built five new towns, established fifteen universities, raised the living standards of her 70 per cent agricultural population and created a navy and a civil air line out of nothing. But the essential is that she has done this without ceding the control of her own economy or the sources of her wealth to foreign capitalists or imposing the totalitarian system of the Communist bloc.

Beside the failure to grasp this fundamental, inaccuracies of fact are perhaps unimportant. But as a vehicle for expressing a concept the *Bahasa* Indonesia is not quite what Mr. Luethy imagines. It is true that the resurrection of a tongue long made to stand still causes the same incongruities in Indonesia as in Ireland or Israel: but if Malay in Latin characters was "at the outset" a "language of merchants and sailors without refinements" it should be pointed out that that outset was at least four centuries ago when the first Europeans arrived. Its earliest inscriptions (in Arabic letters) are as old as the 13th century and it is anyhow

Writers in Prison

Sir,

It has been announced on Moscow Radio and in the Soviet Press that Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, who were said to have had their books published abroad under the pseudonyms of "Abram Tertz" and "Nikolai Arzhak" will have "to answer for their vile fabrications and for conducting propaganda abroad against their own country." We would like to reaffirm what has already been publicly stated by many writers and cultural groups in various countries, that we do not regard the works of either of these distinguished writers as propaganda and we want to re-emphasize that our respect for their work is based solely on its literary and artistic merits. We believe furthermore, that had they been living in any of our countries their work would have also been critical of certain aspects of our societies. The only difference would have been that their books would have been published and their authors would not be in prison.

We can only hope that the Soviet authorities will not remain insensitive to the international voice of the world of letters, which made its attitude perfectly plain in so many messages of its representatives everywhere, including the International P.E.N., and the Community of European Writers (C.O.M.E.S.). Believing as we do that authors have the right to have their work published, we appeal once more to the tolerance and good sense of the Soviet authorities to release these two colleagues of ours, whose books we regard as notable contributions to contemporary writing.

Yours faithfully,

Great Britain: A. ALVAREZ, A. J. AYER, DAVID CARVER (Secretary-General of the International P.E.N.), BRIAN GLANVILLE, GRAHAM GREENE, JULIAN HUXLEY, ROSAMOND LEHMANN, DORIS LESSING, IRIS MURDOCH, HERBERT READ, CLANCY SIGAL, MURIEL SPARK, PHILIP TOYNBEE, JOHN WAIN, BERNARD WALL, C. V. WEDGWOOD, REBECCA WEST.

France: MAURICE BLANCHOT, ANDRÉ BRETON, JEAN CASSOU, MARGUERITE DURAS, PIERRE EMMANUEL, ANDRÉ FRÉNAUD, JEAN GUÉHENNO (de l'Académie Française), FRANÇOIS MAURIAC (de l'Académie Française).

United States: HANNAH ARENDT, W. H. AUDEN, SAUL BELLOW, MICHAEL HARRINGTON, ALFRED KAZIN, MARY MCCARTHY, DWIGHT MACDONALD, ARTHUR MILLER, PHILIP RAHV, PHILIP ROTH, MEYER SCHAPIRO, WILLIAM STYRON.

Germany: HEINRICH BOELL, HANS MAGNUS ENZENSBERGER, GUENTER GRASS, KLAUS HAUPPRECHT, UWE JOHNSON, MARTIN WALSER.

Italy: LIBERO BIGIARETTI, ITALO CALVINO, DIEGO FABBRI, ALBERTO MORAVIA, IGNAZIO SILONE, GIANCARLO VIGORELLI (Secretary-General of C.O.M.E.S.).

Published in The Times (London), 31 January 1966

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arguable that even before that it was written in the Rechang alphabet deriving from the old Cambodian script.

GEORGE EDINGER

Reform Club,
Pall Mall, London

IT is difficult to argue with headlines.

Five new towns? Which ones? And what became of them? Fifteen universities? Oh no—sixty! But ask the students what they think of them. Raised the living standards? This is sensational news indeed. Created a navy and an air line? "Created" is a strange word for machines which are generally manufactured somewhere else, and alas, hardly a nail of it all in Indonesia. But I am full of respect for the Indonesians who keep the planes flying (as for the navy, its navigational record, if any, is unknown).

And the Hong Kong Hilton? and Raffles? These, as we all know, are disgusting symbols of imperialism and neo-colonialism. Hotel Indonesia is a symbol of Sukarnoism. The difference is obvious, and Mr. Edinger should not have missed it.

Turco Westerling in 1950, the Colonels in 1959, the Communists in 1965 (and some troubles in between): can one prove the unity of a country by the number of armed rebellions? As to the appreciation of Malay, we might well discuss at length the age, qualities, and defects of a *lingua franca* which was the vehicle of all Western penetrations, Arab as well as European, which hardly ever stood still (there could be no more misleading comparison than with Gaelic or Hebrew); but my reflexions were on Sukarnoese.

All this leads nowhere. But I am happy to learn that the camel is a Golden Eagle, and that Indonesia is more prosperous, more stable, and more united than ever . . . because—Mr. Edinger may have failed to notice this—I am full of sympathy for this great country and its peoples, and utterly unconcerned with "East of Suez" strategy.

HERBERT LUETHY

Zurich

Carpentier

I HAVE read with great interest ENCOUNTER's September issue on Latin America. May I call your attention to a small factual inaccuracy in the article on Alejo Carpentier (page 106)? There, Carpentier is said to be born and educated in France, whereas Carpentier himself, in a interview printed in the Spanish periodical *Insula* (January 1965), tells that he was born in Habana, in Calle Maloja, and that he spent his childhood at a "*finca*" in Loma de Tierra. Even if he does not explicitly say that he spent the whole of his youth in Cuba, he tells about his journalistic and political activities there, about a journey to Mexico in 1926, and about his arrest in Cuba in 1927. There is no mention of his going to Paris until 1928, at the age of 24. Thus, all his formative years were lived in a Hispano-American setting.

EVA LORENTZEN

Oslo, Norway

AUTHORS

Irving Howe is an American literary critic and political writer. He is the author of a book on William Faulkner (1952), and a collection of his essays, *A World More Attractive*, has recently been published (Horizon Press, New York). He is one of the editors of the radical quarterly review, *Dissent*, and has also co-edited *A Treasury of Yiddish Stories*. His essay in this number will appear as the Introduction to *The Selected Writings of I. B. Singer*, to be published shortly by Random House in its Modern Library series. Secker & Warburg are Singer's publishers in England, and they will soon be bringing out *The Family Moskat*. . . .

THE reproductions on p. 37 and p. 38 are from a 1947 letter from **Alberto Giacometti** to Pierre Matisse, recently re-published (with a translation) in the Museum of Modern Art's *Alberto Giacometti*. . . .

Z. A. Pelczynski's edition of *Hegel's Political Writings* (in the translation of T. M. Knox) was recently published by Oxford University Press. Dr. Shlomo Avineri's critique of Professor Hook's article was published in ENCOUNTER, November 1965. . . .

Pierre Schneider, Paris art critic, contributed "At the Louvre with Miró" to the March 1965 ENCOUNTER. . . .

Cover design by **Colin Banks** and **John Miles.**

Editorial Note

FROM the first of January 1966, **Frank Kermode** has been serving as Co-Editor of ENCOUNTER. Stephen Spender, who has been appointed Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and who is also lecturing at Northwestern University, will continue his active connection with the magazine as a Corresponding Editor.

Frank Kermode is Winterstoke Professor of English at the University of Bristol. He was born in 1919, served in the Navy during World War II, and has taught at various British and American universities. Among his books are *Romantic Image* (1957), *Wallace Stevens* (1960), and *Puzzles and Epiphanies* (1962). He has contributed reviews and articles to the leading British and American journals, including *The New Statesman, Partisan Review, The New York Review of Books, Atlantic Monthly, Kenyon Review*, etc. The Mary Flexner Lectures, which he gave last autumn at Bryn Mawr, will be published by Oxford University Press.

As he writes, "Since I believe in both scholarship and high-journalism I'm irresistibly attracted by the prospect of having to do with both simultaneously. . . ." He lives in an old house about twelve miles north of Bristol. By the courtesy of Bristol University an ENCOUNTER editorial office has been established on University premises.

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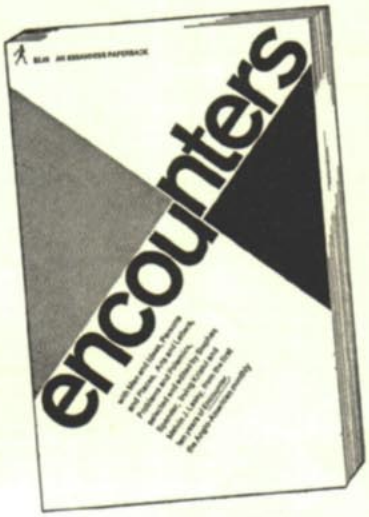

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OBSCENE

In the spring of 1962 a young New York publisher named Ralph Ginzburg brought out an elegant new magazine "devoted to the joys of love and sex." Its name was *Eros*. *Eros* was a lavishly printed hardcover quarterly featuring such long-suppressed masterpieces of art and literature as John Cleland's *Fanny Hill*, Frank Harris's *My Life and Loves*, Mark Twain's *1601*, Robert Burns's *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*, and Edgar Degas's magnificent montotypes for Guy de Maupassant's *Madame Tellier's Brothel*.

Eros was a great and instantaneous success. Art and literary critics all across the country hailed it as a welcome addition to the literature of our time ("It will probably become a status symbol on the coffee tables of our society," said the San Francisco *Chronicle*) and nearly 150,000 Americans purchased subscriptions, despite the fact that its $25-per-year price made it the world's most expensive magazine.

But while *Eros* was kindling the enthusiasm of intellectuals, it was also arousing the deep anxiety of prudes, and it was not long before censors began trying to suppress the magazine. In December, 1962, the Post Office Department hauled Ginzburg into the United States District Court in Philadelphia and charged him with criminal use of the United States Mail on grounds that *Eros* was "obscene."

A trial followed in which more than 70 leaders in the arts and sciences (including Dr. Theodor Reik, Dwight Macdonald, and Nobel Prize-winner Dr. Hermann J. Muller) rallied to Ginzburg's defence. Nevertheless, a Federal judge, sitting without a jury, ruled *Eros* obscene and fined Ginzburg $28,000 and sentenced him to five years in prison. The case is now on appeal to the United States Supreme Court.

Although the *Eros* trial resulted in one of the most dramatic courtroom battles of the century and although the issues it raised rival those of the Scopes Trial, virtually nothing was printed about the case in the American press.

Now, however, the full story of the *Eros* trial will be told, and it will be told by its protagonist, Ralph Ginzburg, in a taut, book-length (35,000-word) narrative entitled "*Eros* on Trial." In it Mr. Ginzburg reveals which top Government officials made the decision to put *Eros* out of business, why the Post Office selected Philadelphia as the arena for the trial, and why the Supreme Court, in deciding the *Eros* case, may hand down a landmark decision declaring all obscenity statutes unconstitutional and therefore null and void forever. (Mr. Ginzburg's Supreme Court appeal is being supported by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Authors League of America, and 111 leading American artists and intellectuals, including August Heckscher, James Jones, Arthur Miller, Otto Preminger, Elmer Rice, Dore Schary, Mark Schorer, Irwin Shaw, William Styron, Louis Untermeyer, Mark Van Doren, Robert Penn Warren, Sloan Wilson, the curator emeritus of the American Museum of Natural History, and the Executive Director of the American Humanist Association.)

This moving, suspenseful account of the *Eros* trial—it may well become a classic in the literature of Free Speech—will be published in FACT Magazine, as part of a special *Eros* Commemorative Issue. FACT will also present portions of the *Eros* trial transcript (they will *astound* you) and a special section entitled "The Most Beautiful Art from *Eros*." This portfolio of artwork contains reprints of 59 pages of *Eros*'s magnificent paintings, drawings, photographs, poetry, and prose. Included are spreads from "The Erotic Sculpture of India," "The Brothel in Art," "Love in the Bible," "Nudes of Yesterday," "The Love Life of Napoleon," "The Animal Love Poems of D. H. Lawrence," and *Eros*'s memorable photographs of the late Marilyn Monroe by Bert Stern.

This special *Eros* Commemorative Issue of FACT is being offered *absolutely free* to all new subscribers to FACT Magazine (a detailed description of FACT appears below). To obtain your copy of this special *Eros* issue and to enter your FACT subscription, simply fill out the coupon below and mail it with $7.50 or £3 to FACT, 110 W. 40th Street, New York, N. Y. 10018. Since this special *Eros* issue is bound to become a collector's item, we urge you to act at once.

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I enclose $7.50 or £3 for a one year subscription to FACT Magazine. I understand that I will receive *free* a copy of FACT's special issue containing a portfolio of the most beautiful artwork, photography, poetry, and prose from the suppressed quarterly *Eros*.

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A few facts about Fact

FACT is a new national bimonthly which specializes in publishing information which has been suppressed by American newspapers, magazines, and TV networks. FACT ranges over Science, Business, Law, History, Communications, Government, Foreign Affairs, and the Arts.

Among notable articles which have appeared in FACT during the past year have been: a special report entitled "The Strange Death of Dag Hammarskjold" which suggests that Dag Hammarskjold deliberately blew up the plane which took him, and 15 other persons, to their deaths in the Congo in 1961; an exposé of how the American press kept the truth about cancer and cigarettes from the American people for over 20 years; an article telling how multimillionaires evade income taxes; and a damning indictment of Detroit for building cars which have needlessly cost hundreds of thousands of American lives because the cars were not sufficiently "crashworthy." (This last article has prompted rigid new Federal standards for automobile structural strength which are expected to reduce highway fatalities enormously.)

FACT is edited for readers of superior intelligence and keen social awareness. Its contributors include America's foremost artists, writers, and thinkers. In less than a year and a half of publication, FACT has won the acclaim of critics all across the country and the enthusiasm of several hundred thousand readers.

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